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work to Brussels**
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Just starting to rock

Ten years after the first festival at the Beijing Midi School of Music, the music scene has made a landmark achievement in organizing more than 10 festivals this year. Despite the optimism, there is a long road ahead for crowds, organizers, sponsors and government.

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Photo by Xiao Yi

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Gov plans celebrations for founding anniversary

By Wang Dong

This year marks the sexagennial of the People's Republic of China. The government is planning a major celebration for October 1, National Day, and many are looking forward to ceremonies.

Celebration schedule

Beijing's planning committee for the 60th National Day announced its celebration plans on Monday.

On September 30, the eve of National Day, the State Council will host a huge reception for government officials and their contacts at the Great Hall of the People.

On the morning of October 1, there will be a massive celebration at Tiananmen Square, during which President Hu Jintao will give a keynote speech, followed by a military parade and a mass pageant.

The military parade will highlight the achievements the country has made in defense during the past six decades and showcase its resolution to safeguard world and regional peace and stability.

The mass pageant will involve 200,000 citizens and 60 floats. The theme will be "The Motherland and I, Marching Together."

On the night of October 1, a gala at Tiananmen Square will feature "colorful performances and a splendid fire-

works display," with senior party and government leaders in attendance.

From October 1 to 3, major parks will host parties and events to celebrate National Day.

A grand musical, "Road to Revival," with a cast of 3,200, will be staged at the Great Hall of the People during the last two weeks in September. It will depict the past 169 years of history chronologically, from the Opium Wars to the present.

Highlights

The 2009 military parade will showcase domestic weapons used by all branches of the armed forces and the military's progression from mechanization to information-based, the *Beijing Daily* reported.

The parade will also include the fighter jets

manned by the country's first woman pilots, a demonstration of the equipment used by the People's Armed Police Force and Militia and Reserve Forces, and new 2007-series army uniforms, the report said.

China has held 13 military parades down Chang'an

Avenue. The last was in 1999 for the semicentennial of the People's Republic. Long-range surface-to-surface missiles and aerial tankers made their debut at that parade.

Another highlight is the evening fireworks on October 1, directed again by Zhang Yimou, Xinhua reported.

Security and weather

Beijing will impose even tougher security measures for the sexagennial than it did for last year's Olympic Games, Xinhua reported.

Thousands of security personnel have been assigned to monitor key infrastructure installations, such as bridges and railways, and patrols of Beijing's underground rail system will be more frequent, the *China Daily* reported.

To enhance security measures, the police bureau plans to recruit as many as 800,000

volunteers to report suspicious activity in the lead-up to the National Day festivities, the report said.

The national meteorological bureau has pledged to use the same weather modification technology it deployed during last summer's Beijing Olympics to disperse rain clouds, Xinhua reported.

The bureau successfully ward off thundershowers last year for the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, bureau director Xie Pu said.

Expectations

"I'm looking forward to seeing a huge celebration for National Day," said Dominic Swire, a news editor for China Radio International. "China has achieved so much in recent years, both economically and geopolitically, it has good reason to hold a massive celebration to show its strength and power on the world stage."

"Although security is a big issue for such a special ceremony, the police system in China is very efficient and I expect it to deploy extra officer to ensure the event goes without any trouble,"

Swire said.

"I'd like to see the fighter planes based on the latest technology," said Liu Wen, a consultant with Accenture and a military buff. "I also want to see the new developments by the navy and air force."

Chinese people need such a huge ceremony to express their pride in the progress the country has made, Liu said.

He said he is looking forward to participating in the park celebrations and parties. "It's a ceremony that everyone in this country should participate in," he said.

Organ donation system to reduce trafficking

By Han Manman

A new national organ donation system started Wednesday is hoped to shake off the country's dependence on parts harvested from executed prisoners as the main source of transplants, and to crack down on organ trafficking.

Ten municipalities and provinces including Shanghai, Guangdong and Tianjin will take part in a pilot program to better manage organ donations and ensure patients who most need a transplant can get one.

The pilot will test a new administration system with clear rule on organ recipients, enhanced post-surgery visits and subsidies for poor recipients.

The system, run by the national and provincial Red Cross, will follow international practices for open, fair and impartial organ management and should help reduce the black market for body parts, Vice Minister of Health Huang Jiefu said.

Currently, 1 million people in China need organ transplants each year: 1 percent receives one. Only about 130 people have signed up to donate their organs since 2003, according to research

on post-mortem donations by Chen Zhonghua, a professor at the Institute of Organ Transplantation at Tongji Hospital.

"That is far from enough to meet demand," Chen said.

The majority of transplanted organs come from executed prisoners, Huang told the *China Daily* Wednesday. His interview was a rare official admission of the dubious source of China's donor organs. Huang said 65 percent of donations come from death row inmates.

But they are "definitely not a proper source for organ transplants," Huang said.

Voluntary donations remain far below demand in China, partly because of cultural biases against organ removal before burial.

"The huge shortage of organ donors and organs has created a significant black market for organs despite a national law that bans organ trafficking, which in turn has ruined public faith and willingness to donate organs," Chen said.

Chen said transplant efforts were hampered not only by a lack of donors but also by the lack of a system to match organs with recipients. As a result, only a frac-



The government says 65 percent of donor organs come from death row inmates.
CFP Photo

tion of viable organs are used.

Under the new system, all hospitals must report their patients and demands for organs to the provincial Red Cross, which will identify the most suitable recipient when an organ is available. Previously, the hospitals decided who got each organ, and the recipient was often decided by bribery rather than need.

Fan Jia, a liver transplant expert and vice president of Shanghai's Zhongshan Hospital, supports the system.

"A national system can better regulate the source and use of organs," he said.

"Key organs like the liver must be taken within 5 minutes of the heart's last beat. Otherwise, they become useless," Fan said. "The new system means we can get information from a wider range of hospitals about possible donors."

He said China has no laws allowing organs to be harvested from brain-dead patients; doctors must wait for the heart to stop. The Ministry of Health is now considering standards for brain death, which could open up a greater source for donor organs.

Meeting green target requires more than technology

By He Jianwei

"Green construction in China depends too much on technology. In the future, we must focus on strengthening awareness of how to save energy in daily life," Wang Youwei, director of Green Construction and Energy-saving Committee, said Thursday at the Green Building Roundtable.

The municipal government started its second "1-yuan Energy-saving Bulbs" project this June, selling 10 million bulbs to residents for 1 yuan each.

It is part of a continuing effort to promote high-efficiency lighting products in Chaoyang, Haidian, Tongzhou and Shunyi districts. The bulbs are expected to be installed in 2.3 million households by the end of this month.

According to statistics, high-efficiency lighting products cut household electric use by 15 percent. "The figure shows promise for future energy-saving. It costs less than altering a building," Wang said.

The country began following green building standards in 2006. "The government realizes the importance of saving energy

in construction. We have followed other countries' examples and adopted new technologies," he said.

The results have been less obvious than initially hoped.

New construction accounts for 50 percent of the country's raw materials use, 42 percent of its carbon emissions and more than 40 percent of its waste.

According to last year's statistics, only around 1 percent of existing buildings and 5 percent of new ones meet the national green building and energy-saving standard. Around 21 billion

square meters of construction are wasting energy.

Beijing is the first city in China to promote using energy-saving bulbs. Last year, the government carried out the project in Dongcheng, Xicheng, Chongwen and Xuanwu districts. Eight out of 10 people now choose energy-saving bulbs in several big lamp markets.

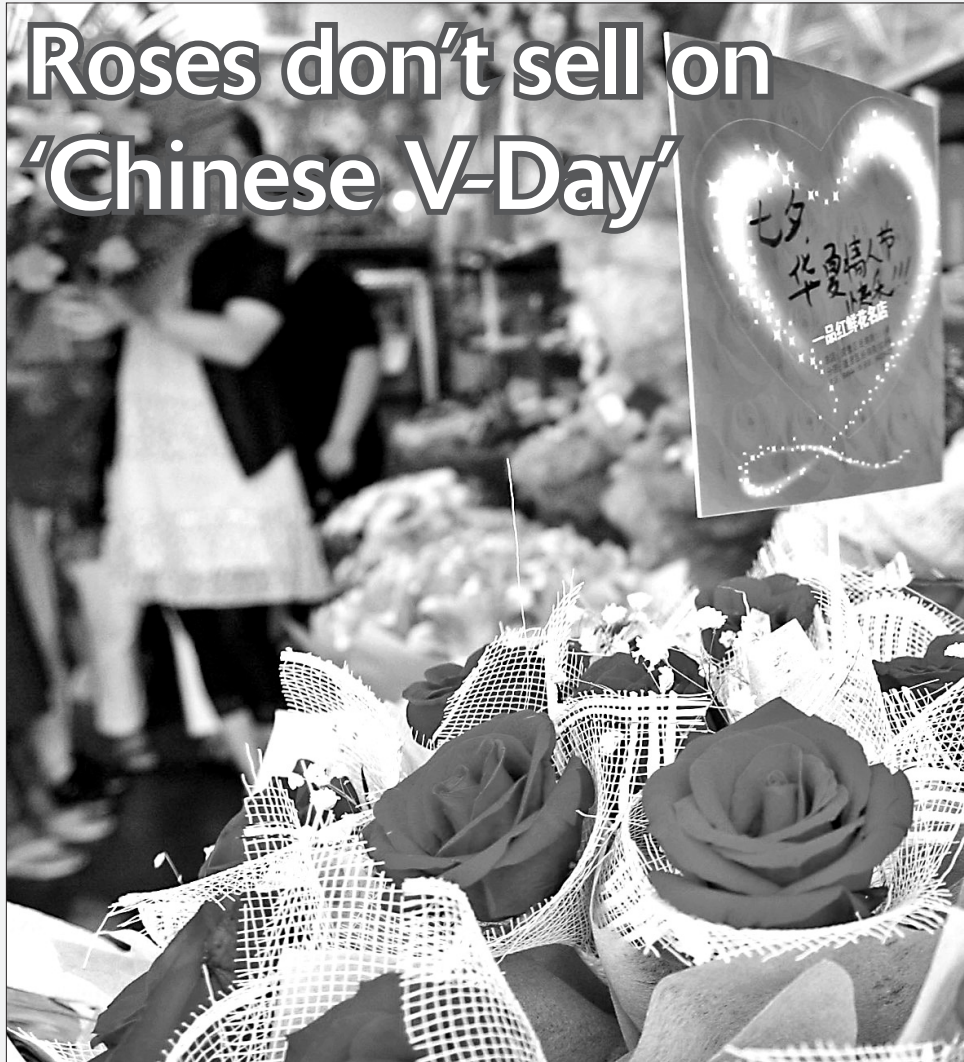
Currently, 5 million energy-saving bulbs are in regular use. These bulbs save 200 million kilowatt hours of electricity and 120 million yuan in electricity a year, according to

the Beijing Development and Reform Commission.

The government has set a goal for the building market to meet 50 percent of its energy-saving target next year, and 65 percent by 2020 as part of its pledge to "sustainable development," Yang Rong, director of the Center of Science and Technology of Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, said.

As the world's top construction market, the country builds 2 billion square meters every year — a growth rate equal to every developed country combined.

Roses don't sell on 'Chinese V-Day'



Young couples prefer Western Valentine's Day to Chinese Qixi.

CFP Photo

By Zhang Dongya

The traditional festival Qixi was this Wednesday, according to the lunar calendar. The last few years, Qixi has been rebranded with a more commercial name: Chinese Valentine's Day.

But unlike its Western counterpart, Qixi's reception can only be described as cold.

Qixi falls on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month. Legend has it that a cowherd named Niulang is only allowed to meet his wife, the immortal Zhinu, on this day by crossing a bridge of magpies. The day is considered a time for lovers' reunions.

Most Chinese people, especially the young, do not celebrate the festival. Summer Sun, 25, said he only learned it was Qixi while checking the Internet. Since he has no girlfriend, he did not plan any activities for the festival.

But, Mark Han and Sally Jiang, both 27, planned no events either. "We focus on Valentine's Day — having dinner together and preparing presents for each other. One holiday is enough, and we do not need another one to do the same thing," the husband Han said.

"Chinese Valentine's Day" — purely a marketing term — has not sold couples on the need to spend money the way February 14 has. Sun said he might consider spending the day with his future girlfriend, but only as a

traditional holiday.

The new name carries none of the commercial impact of Western Valentine's Day. Cinemas remain full price, and flower shops never run short on stock.

"We do not have sales promotions on this day," Lily Wu, a spokesperson for cake store Bread Talk, said. "It is still unknown." There are no special activities at Sanlitun Village or Happy Valley.

And so it comes as a blow when Japan seems better at celebrating a Chinese holiday than China. Recent reports showed how many Japanese couples were planning grand activities to celebrate the day.

Legend of the Chinese Qixi Festival, including its origin and history, as well as various celebrations in Japan, can be found all over the Japanese Internet. Most couples choose to celebrate the festival on July 7, though a few follow the lunar calendar. There is dancing and singing, but it is absolutely not Valentine's Day even in Japan.

With the Qixi Festival becoming part of Japanese culture, many netizens have called on everyone to find a Chinese way to celebrate the holiday. "It feels strange to hear that Qixi is part of Japanese culture. But what are we supposed to do on this holiday to make it ours again?" Rongmama, a netizen, asked online.

Tennis tournament to serve during Golden Week



Pop singers Zhang Liangying and Yang Kun sing the China Open theme.

By Huang Daohen

The 2009 China Open, the country's top tennis event, runs October 2 to 11 on the Olympic Green's tennis courts during the national holiday.

The organizers have released a theme song for the tournament, "To Fly Proudly," a duet by pop singers Zhang Liangying and Yang Kun. The song was selected after three years of submissions.

"A powerful theme song adds charm and dynamics to the tournament and draws tennis fans," Zhang Junhui, managing direc-

tor of China Open, said.

This year, the 10-day tournament has been upgraded to one of the top-tier Asian events, putting it just a step below the four annual grand slams. The men's meet has been upgraded from a secondary tournament to the ATP 500 Series, while the women's meet was upgraded to a Crown-Pearl tournament.

Tennis stars are always the draw for fans. According to the organizing committee, world No. 2 men's player Rafael Nadal and world No. 1 women's player

Dinara Safina have confirmed their attendance.

Chinese fans will also see previous champions like Marat Safin, Fernando Gonzalez, Andy Roddick and Serena Williams. Chinese hopefuls Li Na, Zheng Jie and Peng Shuai will also compete for the title.

WTA top 50 players and most of the ATP top 30 players will share 45 million yuan.

There will be 168 matches, including men's and women's events, the organizer said. The women's main draw matches

start October 3 and the men's on October 5. Men's and women's events will be held alternately, so ticket holders of one session will be able to watch both men's and women's events.

"If you are lucky enough, one ticket may enable you to watch Rafael Nadal and Maria Shavopova," Zhang said.

The official China Open website at chinaopen.com.cn has more detailed information on tournament schedules, tickets and entertainment programs.

CFP Photo



Woodstock was 40 years ago, but China is only now developing music festivals.

By Wang Yu

Ten years after its debut performance at the Beijing Midi School of Music, the music festival scene made a landmark achievement with more than 10 festivals this year.

"I think this is just the first step," said Zhang Fan, president of the Midi school and organizer of China's first music festival. Despite the optimism, music festivals have a long road ahead of them.

When Zhang Tianyu went to the Midi Festival in 2002, he was shocked by both the music and the strange clothes around him. "It was like being surrounded by a bunch of hooligans. But those were the guys who loved what I loved: playing and making music," he said.

The next year, he enrolled in the Beijing Midi School of Music to learn drums. Zhang Tianyu has been playing for local rock band TheRoy for the last three years, and he has never missed a festival.

"I have fun watching the performances every year, and as an alumnus, my emotions always drag me back," he said.

Indie platform

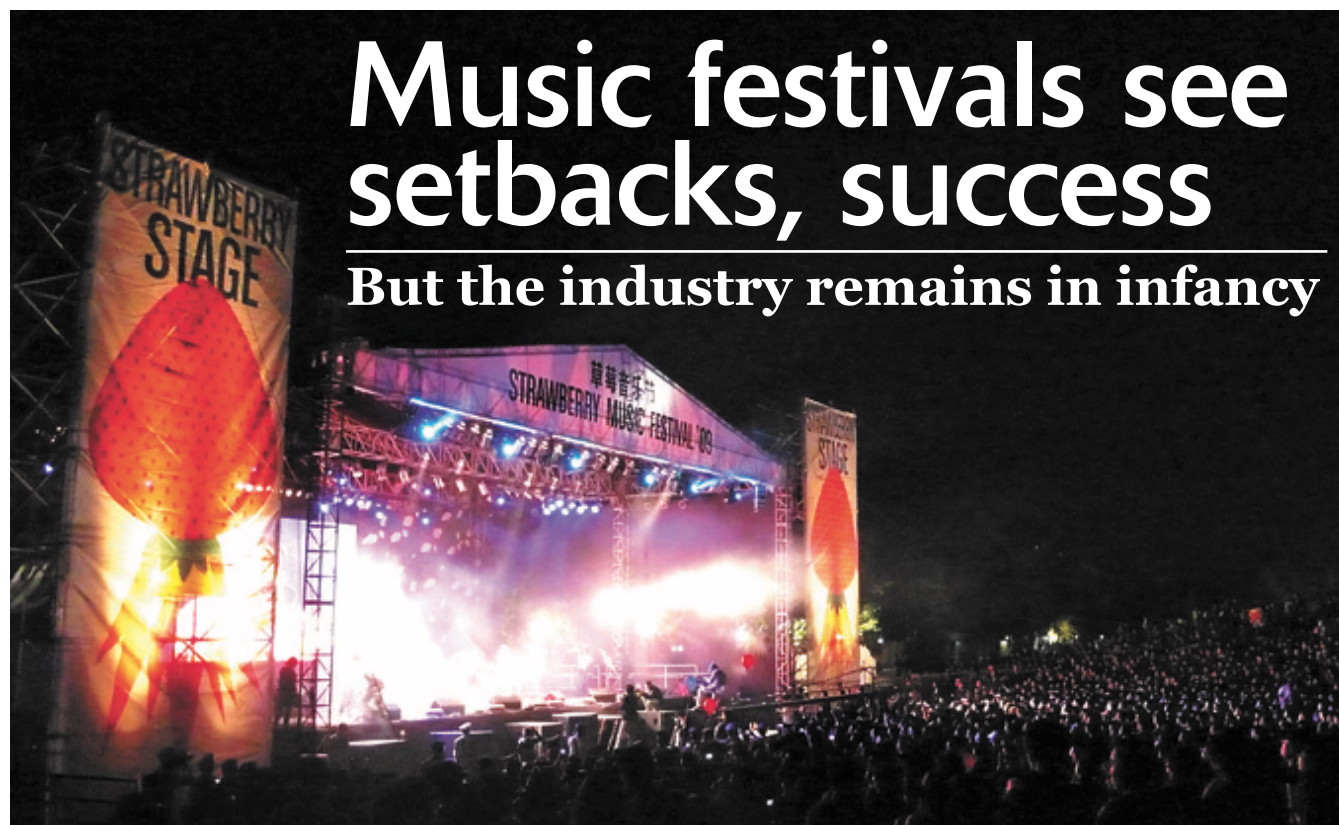
Midi Festival has become an icon. The first ever Midi took place from May 1 to 2, 2000, at the school's hall: it was more alumni party than commercial rock concert. There were about 1,000 people in the audience, admission was free and the artists went unpaid. Most came from the student body and the city's rock underground.

"The feedback was pretty good because, at that time, there was nowhere for young music fans to get together and enjoy what they liked," Zhang Fan said.

"Before Midi, my only experiences with such events were videos of foreign music festivals like Woodstock," said Li Hongjie, chief editor of *InMusic* magazine. This year, he started his own *InMusic* Festival on the grasslands of Zhangbei county, Hebei Province.

The festival was a new concept for young music fans, and its success has encouraged Zhang Fan to continue the series. However, it was not until 2004 that the festival moved off campus to the Beijing International Sculpture Garden. That was when things went commercial.

The festival had its biggest success in Haidian Park in 2005, and new brands started one after another. Two years later, The Modern Sky Festival took the same venue over the national holiday and built a reputation as the more pop and trendy festival.



Modern Sky Records started the Strawberry Festival this May Day holiday.

Photo provided by Modern Sky Records

And Zhang Fan remains behind the scenes as an advisor.

"Shen Lihui (founder of Modern Sky Records) came to me for help and I gave him the hard drive of my computer with all the documents about the Midi Festival. I don't think we are competing – in a big city like Beijing, two music festivals are hardly enough," Zhang said.

A hard day's night

Though music festivals are held everywhere in the country, their organization is a test of patience, negotiation ability and luck – especially in the capital.

Last year's Midi, which had 120 native acts and 30 from overseas, was supposed to be a musical warm-up for the Olympic Games. Relevant licenses and visas for the foreign artists were all issued by government departments. Then the event was cancelled under pressure from the public security bureau after the riots in Tibet – eight days left before the festival was supposed to begin, according to the timetable.

"Last year it was the Olympics. This year it's the country's sexagen-

chief of a German finance company joked with me that the festival was well-protected by the police, because every listener plays the role of security guard. The more we hold similar events without issue, the more relaxed the security bureau gets in granting us a license," Zhang said.

Another problem is accounting. The profits of a music festival

"What young people in the West know about music is usually taught by their parents. That doesn't happen here."

– Zhang Fan, Midi President

come mostly from ticket sales and sponsors. Midi Festival turned a profit for the first time in 2007, and Modern Sky broke even last year. However, to keep the festival spirit, the organizers must confront and reject sponsors with unacceptable requirements.

Once a beer brand asked to put its logo of a big bottle with a woman in a bikini on both sides

here. What we care about is the opportunity to get the country talking about Zhangbei County," said Sun Xiaohan, vice-secretary of the county's party committee.

As a high-ranking official in one of the poorer counties, Sun is eager for such opportunities to publicize the county and attract future economic growth. "I can't say whether rock music is good or bad. People should just keep an open mind to different things," he said.

While the government may be open, the Zhangbei public security bureau feels the exact opposite. Reaching an agreement is a laborious process.

Sun is not the only one who sees music festivals as a way to promote a county. In May, the Zebra Music Festival ended in Chengdu with huge support from the local government.

Li Dai, central executive officer of Zebra Media, said the company will make the festival profitable within three years. Unlike the rebellious Midi, Zebra also attempted to meet the needs of its sponsors and the government. It performed

magazine signed a 10-year contract with the government. While fans grumbled about the organizer's inexperience, incompetence and lack of basic services such as toilets, Sun still said it was a good start.

"We never thought that there would be over 170,000 people going to Zhangbei for three days without a security accident. To us, the brand is more important than the money we can earn during the festival," Sun said.

Ahead of audience

There were over 5,000 cars parked on the Zhangbei grasslands: most belonged to one of several auto clubs. They came for a regular weekend party, and not for the festival.

"When the rock fans started a pogo mob, the security guards and other listeners were totally confused," said Cai Jingzhou who came to the festival with his colleagues from a sports company.

Compared with the crowds at music festivals in Western countries, the local crowds are less experienced. The rock music scene is still a small circle, so promoters invite mainstream singers to attract more people.

At the Zebra Music Festival, Hong Kong and Taiwan such as S.H.E. and Shin performed on the main stage to thousands of screaming teens. However at the Green Banner Festival in Hohhot, the singer Li Yuchun – champion of the Super Girl talent show in 2005 – received nothing but catcalls and a barrage of water bottles.

Music festivals which focus on indie music are rarely cloned in China due to the limited audience. "Music festivals progress faster than the audiences' taste in music. What young people in the West know about music is usually taught by their parents. That doesn't happen here," Zhang said.

"Still, the festivals are a great platform where we can cultivate a love for a variety of music beyond the genre stereotypes. We're still at the beginning," he said.



Zhang Fan, president of the Midi School of Music, now advises other festival organizers.

Photo by Sun Yi

nial, which is making it harder for us to survive," Zhang said. Every organizer faces political pressure. It took Midi 10 years of negotiation experience and a clean record to start getting easy licenses. At least from every department except the one in charge of security: there is an ongoing fear of having thousands of people in one place.

The audience knows this, and that's why they cherish the three days they do get. "In 2007, the

of its main stage, a website even hoped to put its flags everywhere in the venue. Such requirements have been rejected, much to the puzzlement of advertisers who are used to the anything-for-money attitude of the mainstream.

"The sponsors will also need to grow with us as they did in the West," Zhang said.

Promoting government

"No matter who is on stage ... they are the same to most people

at Poly Park, a new project by the Poly Group between downtown Chengdu and Xindu district. The festival brought attention to the area and contributed to a surge in real estate value around the park.

For the local government, the event offers a chance to rebuild the city's image as a cultural center and heal Chengdu's travel industry, which remains shaky since the Wenchuan earthquake of 2008.

In Zhangbei county, *InMusic*

How deep into villages will jobless graduates go?

By Jin Zhu

Three years ago, Beijing became a laboratory for a national policy that sought to attract new *cunguan* or village officials from among university students. That year, it hired 2,000 graduates who were posted in the suburbs. Now, the policy has been implemented nationwide. But some of the pioneer hires have mixed feelings regarding the career they chose.



With no proper understanding of the job, more graduates are rushing to become village officials. CFP Photo

When dreams encounter reality

Ma Lili, 28, starts her day early as an office assistant at the Bureau of Forestry in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia.

She moved back to her hometown after less than a year as a village officer for the Beijing municipal government.

"My current salary is much less than what I received working in Beijing, not to mention the benefits," says the International Relations major from the Communication University of China.

"But I feel more relaxed now," she says, unwilling to trade peace of mind for the material comforts of her Beijing job.

Like most college students who graduated in 2008, Ma entered a tight job market, and thus, saw the lure of an instant posting as a village officer.

There were other bonuses: obtaining the much-coveted

Beijing *hukou* or residential registration after three years on the job; and getting priority over other applicants should she decide to work for a state-run institution.

"As a migrant student, staying in Beijing as a registered resident after graduation is definitely not easy. Being a village officer was one of the ways to make it come true," Ma says.

She was appointed one of Haidian District's 40 village officials, and was sent to work in Shangzhuang Town, about 30 kilometers outside the downtown.

Although she did not possess knowledge or skills in the technological or agricultural sciences that are essential in sub-rural areas, Ma still had dreams of making a difference through her work.

Little did she know that disappointment awaited.

She soon discovered that most

"village officers" became glorified assistants to village party secretaries or village committee heads; their main tasks involved drafting documents or writing speeches for their bosses, recording the minutes of meetings and creating party members' written profiles.

After the day's work, which included house visits, she felt hollow inside.

"I felt like a stranger there, which made me depressed," Ma says. "Compared with my classmates, my job was the most difficult yet had the lowest pay. I could not sleep and wondered again and again if my choice was correct."

She decided to hang on to her job and tried to win the confidence of the village residents. Gradually, she grew to understand the local economic situation and human relations; she realized being a competent vil-



Ma's main job was to write speeches for village leaders everyday. Photo by Ma Lili

lage official was not easy.

"In the village, you will win the masses' hearts if you can help solve public conflicts. Otherwise, no one pays attention to the opinion of village officials who are regarded as strangers," Ma says.

Soon, she followed the example of other officials who chose to stay out of local conflicts.

As Ma continued to struggle with her career choice, her employers released new work policies that helped her make the big decision.

Last March, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Personnel said that when village officers' three-year contract expires, only 20 percent of them will be rehired. The original policy guaranteed everyone job security.

"It meant that in less than four months, 80 percent of the first 2,000 village officials who began working in 2006 would need to find a new job," Ma says.

The news affected her morale and she reached her breaking point.

"There was so much uncertainty ahead that I couldn't bear it. So I decided to quit," she says.

"They're knowledgeable and open-minded, but lack a deep understanding of Chinese society"

Behind the growing recruitment program

While Ma was re-charting her career path earlier this year, the government was starting another round of recruitment of village officials.

According to the Beijing Municipal Party Committee Organization Department, it plans to employ 1,600 village officers from among 19,463 university students. The application rate was 1:12, exceeding the previous years' 1:6.

"Many college students are most concerned with the preferential policies and almost have zero idea about what the job entails and what skills it needs. They're knowledgeable and open-minded, but lack a deep understanding of the bigger Chinese society," says Li Yuanchao, head

of the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee.

A survey of graduating students conducted by Renmin University of China in 2006 showed that more than 57 percent of respondents believed a job as a village officer was a good answer to the lack of job prospects; 17 percent thought the job would provide them with good professional experiences; and 24 percent hoped to build a career and a life in the village.

"There's no doubt that the little understanding of reality and rather high expectations will result in great disappointment among most village officers," Zhou Xiaozheng, a sociology professor from

Renmin University, says.

But Zhou says government officials are partly to blame. Some of them have put too much emphasis on the preferential policies, rather than the day-to-day work conditions.

Village leaders also have their own agenda that exacerbates the situation. "Since the central government initiated the move to hire college graduates to work in villages across China, the popularity achieved by village officials has become an important target related to the achievements of local leaders," the professor says.

The imbalanced sales pitch students hear from their elders is irresponsible and harms the government's reputation, Zhou says.

Finding a way out and forward

Compared with the 1960s' "educated youth" who were banished to the rural areas, the choices of the current generation of youngsters are heavily influenced by the desire for money and glory.

"University students born in the 1980s and 1990s simply lack vision. Their choices are driven by monetary desires," Zhou says.

"How to help them find a way out (of the village job) is therefore a huge reason to safeguard the policy's continuity."

The government has now begun using its muscle to help village officials who want to make a career switch.

Ex-officers will get 10 extra points on the entrance exam for postgraduate school and they will be given priority on the queue for the civil service exams, the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee announced in April.

Beginning this year, state-run institution will also allot 40 percent of their new job slots to former village officers, the committee said.

Meanwhile, Zhou says the graduates also need to think of creative ways to get out of their corner.

"For students who majored in the agricultural sciences and technology, there's no doubt many of them have applied their knowledge on the job. They can be given subsidies or preferential policies to set up their own business," he says.

Ma Lili, for her part, believes that village officers should be given training to handle more challenging tasks beyond writing documents and taking notes.

"Helping village officers learn skills such as financial management will give them an edge in finding other jobs in the future," she says.

South is short of workers

Trade orders boost demand for pre-holiday migrant labor

By Huang Daohen

Tackling the employment problem is no longer a worry for the politicians alone. Since early this year, factory owners in southern China have shared that headache.

But as orders pile up with the approach of the Christmas shopping season in overseas markets, factories in the Pearl River Delta and Yangtze River Delta have found themselves awash in orders.

The problem is everyone who came to staff these boom factories earlier in the year has left. In some of the most desperate areas, foremen camp outside bankrupt factories hoping to redirect former employees to where there the work.



Every year, millions of migrants are returning from their hometowns to seek work after Chinese New Year.
CFP/Getty Images

Legendary recruiter

Zhang Quanshou, 40, "captain of the migrant workers," is busy again.

He is the manager of Shenzhen-based Quanshun Human Resource Dispatch Company, an agency that sources migrant workers to fill the factories.

Earlier this month, he rushed back to his hometown, Zhumadian city in northern Henan Province, to recruit more workers. He needed a host of people to staff new and reopened Shenzhen factories with an emergency shortage of labor.

"It is harvest season, and farmers are unwilling to travel to the far south," Zhang said. He managed to round up several hundred people on his trip: His goal was several thousand.

The shortage was seriously unexpected.

For a year, the global financial crisis has mercilessly slashed the demand for factory labor, which left Zhang's firm with a backlog of workers. "At that time, my firm was in trouble," he said. Things have changed.

Since July, the labor demands of Pearl River Delta enterprises have rocketed. The Shenzhen

Labor and Social Security Bureau said the job shortage had become a labor shortage, and there were 60,000 unfilled positions in June.

Export-oriented enterprises

region had become critical.

Sensing the business opportunity, Zhang positioned his firm as a pooling center for migrant workers before deployment. Every year,



Zhang Quanshou (right) says his agency had to shift to training.

CFP Photo

have seen signs of recovery, Zhang said. Even as he spoke with *Beijing Today*, calls flooded in from factories in need of migrant workers.

Supply and demand

Zhang, a former migrant worker himself, founded his dispatch company in 2001. At that time, the shortage of migrant workers in the

he found work for hundreds, then thousands and then tens of thousands of migrants.

In better years, migrant workers from Henan, Anhui and Shandong provinces flocked to his company. They were usually put up for two or three days in Zhang's firm before being dispatched to local factories.

While waiting for a job, the workers' accommodations and meals were covered by Zhang's company.

The financial turmoil changed all that. As demand shrank in the international market, trade orders for factories in Guangdong fell by 30 percent, and then 40 percent last year. Many factories had to lay off staff; some shut down.

With the jobs gone, the migrant workers returned home. In the first quarter of this year, employment in Guangdong fell 20 percent year-on-year, according to the Guangdong Bureau of Statistics.

Though the situation is now more optimistic, Zhang worries about the hardship of placing migrant workers in jobs. Over the last year, more and more of the workers he placed were returned to his camp.

"It was horrible when the factories told me that there would be no more jobs for workers," he said.

Now, Zhang said he is adding training programs to meet the market demand. But he said the training can only cover basic discipline, like behavioral guidelines: "No spitting. No smoking or drinking on the job. No fighting. No weird clothes."

Market watch

Labor shortage spreads

The labor shortage is not limited to Shenzhen: The Yangtze River Delta now shares the burden.

Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, has about 100,000 job vacancies, according to the city's statistics bureau. New orders in the city's textile sector increased 20 percent in July, while the city's foreign trade volume grew to 1.34 billion yuan, up 10.1 percent over the previous month.

In the first half of this year, sales of domestic-oriented brands grew 30 percent, according to the Wenzhou Fashion Association.

"Last time we saw such a severe shortage in the manufacturing industry was in 2005," an official told the *21 Century Business Herald*.

Another city in the region, Dongguan, Guangdong Province – hit hard by the global financial crisis – now faces a labor shortage. As the macro economy recovers, companies and governmental agencies are asking inland and western regions for more workers.

A human resources manager was quoted by Xinhua as saying the company is using all possible channels to find workers, including job hunters, job fairs, ad postings and camping outside bankrupt factories.

Analyst

The shortage of migrant workers may be a sign of economic recovery, but we should not be "blindly optimistic" about the economy, said Zhao Xiao, a professor of economics at the University of Science and Technology Beijing, citing Premier Wen Jiabao.

Positive factors including infrastructure projects, expanding domestic demand and restructur-

ing have led to the recovery of Guangdong's economy, Zhao said.

Besides, the labor demand along the coast is partly driven by the Christmas shopping season in overseas markets. "Western companies need products made in China. We get new orders. Our migrant workers get new jobs," Zhao said.

The employment situation in

Guangdong is closely linked to foreign trade, he said. Recently, foreign trade in Guangdong rebounded, and the decline in exports has slowed to 21.2 percent in May, 18 percent in June, and 15.1 percent in July.

Zhao said the labor shortage will ease in September.

As for economic recovery, Zhao said the July data pointed

to continued recovery in the second half of this year, which is led by strong government-backed investments.

The surge in bank credit in the first half provided funds for investment growth, but it has also generated concerns about rising inflation, non-performing loans and asset bubbles, he said.

Do Chinese characters need 'cosmetic surgery'?

Further standardization

After eight years of work, the MOE unveiled two weeks ago a list of 8,300 "standardized" characters, in the hope of further regulating the Chinese language's written form.

Ministry officials and experts said the revisions would only target 44 characters printed in the Song typeface on publications; meaning, the revised characters would only appear on computers and printing machines.

Experts made the changes after taking into consideration the traditional Chinese script, still in use in Taiwan.

"The readjustment was made against the backdrop of the information age and for the sake of facilitating information storage, management and exchange," Li Yuming, deputy director of the State Language Work Committee, said.

"Slight amendments will not affect the lives of ordinary people, and it will bode well for the standardization of printing," he said.

But disputes immediately arose when the public saw that some of the characters looked different from the original. Since many of the 44 characters are used frequently, people complained that the changes would hamper their ease of reading and writing, and would involve getting rid of old habits and learning new ones.

There were also strong objections to the huge cost of the revisions.

An online survey conducted by leading Internet portal Sina.com showed 95 percent of more than 368,000 respondents opposed the revisions as of yesterday, while only 5 percent voted for them.

But data released by the ministry's Language and Words Information Management Division says the contrary. The feedback it received from the public through email, fax and traditional mail showed that 67 percent of respondents supported the revisions while 6 percent voted against them, it said.

"Minute changes would not affect people's reading habits," said Wang Ning, vice director of the Institute of Linguistics under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, who is among the experts who worked on the revisions. "The 44 characters account for no more than six per thousand of the total on the list, so it would not force the public to learn all the Chinese characters again."

"Whether or not to make a readjustment of a character does not depend on the votes, but on whether it is reasonable to do so," she said. "Of course, we are not against the public. We are sincerely listening to the public."

The solicitation of opinion will end Monday.

By Venus Lee

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has begun soliciting public opinion regarding a new list of simplified Chinese characters. One of its proposals - to alter the form of 44 characters - resurrected a debate about whether Chinese script should be revised or left alone.



Can you see the differences? Some say MOE's move may create trouble for language learners. CFP Photo

Expert's view

A character is only a symbol used for communication and cognition. It can function well as long as people agree on its meaning and it can help express their thoughts.

The revision of the 44 characters would lead to amendments in books, dictionaries, signboards, company names, IDs, the input method in computers and other machines. That will not only cost lots of money and time, but also goes against the stability and continuity of the Chinese character's usage and development.

So the government should fully consider the public's opinion



Tim Eckley (left), a 15-year-old sophomore, studies Chinese in Colorado.

IC Photo
before making revisions. After all, Chinese characters are the legacy of all Chinese people.

- Xiao Huanrong, professor

at the International Communication College, Communication University of China

Background

Tradition vs simplified

As a syllabic and ideographic writing, the Chinese script has a history of 3,400 years. It is one of the oldest writing systems in the world.

Today, there are two ways to write Chinese characters. One is traditional Chinese, which usually contains many strokes and is still used in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and by some overseas Chinese communities; the other is simplified Chinese, which has been used on the Chinese mainland since the founding of the People's Republic.

The mainland introduced simplified characters in 1956. They were created by decreasing the number of strokes from the traditional ver-

sion to make writing easier.

In 1986, the State Language Commission revised the list of 7,000 simplified characters; this revision remains in use today.

The latest list contains 1,330 new characters. They are mainly people's family names and given names, geographical names and scientific and technical terminologies.

"Life changes so fast and so does the use of language, so we made the changes to regulate the use of characters for the convenience of work and life," Wang Ning said.

The new list includes three traditional characters, bringing the grand total to six, said Li of the State Language Work Committee.

Both Wang and Li said the

latest modifications had nothing to do with restoring traditional characters.

Some people on the mainland have called for the restoration of traditional characters for the sake of "cultural preservation." But Wang does not see the wisdom in this. "I don't think there is any need to switch back to traditional Chinese characters, nor to make the current ones even simpler. Our top priority is to improve and standardize the simplified Chinese characters," she said.

"Switching back to traditional Chinese characters means more than a billion of Chinese people would have to relearn their mother language," she said.

Voices

Chinese comment

Will bring more confusion

The change may only be one stroke per character, but if a pupil asks me which versions of the same character is written correctly, I wouldn't know how to reply. There will be much confusion, especially for children, if different ways of writing the same character exists. So I think it is needless to make such changes. The written method needs to remain stable for a long period of time.

- An Li, Chinese language teacher

A significant move

The move has significance on the standardization of Chinese characters. In following the general trend of development, of society progressing, Chinese characters also need to evolve, so I think the adjustments are acceptable.

- Li Xin, government employee, Dongcheng District

Monkey business

To do "cosmetic surgery" on Chinese characters is monkey business. In my eyes, their revision is like making a cripple of a healthy person. What the committee members altered was not the Chinese characters but their loneliness.

- Zhang Jun, netizen

Foreigners' say

While local Chinese are divided over the pros and cons, foreigners living and working in Beijing see more of trouble with the MOE's move. "It will surely create more trouble for Westerners learning Mandarin," one said.

Troublesome for Westerners

Chinese characters are an important symbol of Chinese civilization. It is reasonable that the government add to them. I think it would be easy for Korean and Japanese students to identify those 44 new characters, but it would be troublesome for Westerners to remember those slight changes.

- Kim Hee Kyung, South Korean student at the Beijing Language and Culture University

Create more trouble

Although I haven't seen the list, my first reaction when I heard this news was, "Oh no!" It's very difficult for foreigners to learn the Chinese characters. The changes in those 44 frequently used characters will probably create a lot of trouble for beginners like me.

- Dominic Swire, journalist

Respect people's will

There's nothing left for us foreigners to say about the change, because it is the Chinese people who mainly use the characters. But any change in the characters should respect the people's will.

- Jurriaan Meyer, managing director at an IT company

For the homeless, a place to sleep and bathe

By Jin Zhu

Beside the Suzhou River is a house where some of Shanghai's homeless go to sleep and take a bath twice a week. Renewal Center, the building, is owned by Jimmy McWhinney, a 35-year-old Texan.

McWhinney worked as an accountant back home, but he also loved doing volunteer work, especially counseling and guiding troubled young men and women.

"There's no special reason I love helping people, it's just one of the things I like most in life," he said.

McWhinney, who came to Shanghai in 2001, lives simply: His days revolve around learning Chinese and doing volunteer work.

He said Shanghai's homeless caught his attention upon arriving in the city. "I always walked the streets to find homeless people and tried to talk with them. 'Besides money, what

help do you need the most?' was my frequent question to them."

The American said he was surprised that they only asked for basic things: drinking water, a bath, clean clothes and a haircut. "Then I thought of setting up the Renewal Center," he said.

In 2008, his plan became reality.

He calls "guests" the homeless people he welcomes to the Renewal Center every Wednesday and Sunday, and hundreds have already paid him a visit. "Some of them have even become friends and volunteers in the center," he says.

One of them is Li Feng. The 24-year-old, who moved from Hainan Province five months ago, has drifted from place to place doing manual labor.

After failing to find regular work in Shanghai, he began to roam the streets. "At the time, I collected garbage in the daytime and slept on



McWhinney calls every homeless a guest and cares for their daily needs.
Photo by Yang Lei

benches outside department store at night," Li said.

Li still clearly remembers the first time he set foot on the Renewal Center. "There was lamplight, furniture and smiles, things that all warmed my heart," he says.

Last month, one of McWhinney's friends opened a Western restaurant in Shanghai and he recommended Li for work. "I hope they (homeless people) can find a job to support themselves. It's the best way to help them," McWhinney said.

He makes a distinction between the Renewal Center and government-run shelters by describing his center as paying particular attention to the feelings of homeless people.

His work is limited by funds, but he still sees room to grow. "At present, all the funds used to run the center come from private donors. The center is so small that it can only provide aid to about 60 people every week," McWhinney said.

But he hopes to soon register the center as a charity institution to facilitate its development.

Meanwhile, when he is not busy at the center, McWhinney drops by Shanghai Railway Station to meet new homeless people. "I'm familiar with their hangouts and enjoy sitting beside them on the ground and talking about the latest news in their lives," he said.

Aroma Jockey brings scents to counter sweaty disco nights



Eric Berghammer

Photo provided by Eric Berghammer

By Gan Tian

There was something strange in the air at the local nightclub Cargo last Saturday evening. When Rihanna's hit "Disturbia" began to rock, they could smell roses, followed by the scent of chocolate and vanilla.

The master behind the magic was Eric Berghammer, a 29-year-old Austrian AJ, or "aroma jockey." He reasoned that if there was disc jockey to please your ears in the nightclub with music, a video jockey to please your eyes with different visual effects and lighting systems, then an AJ was in order to please your nose.

Working with the whisky brand Glenmorangie, which contains more than one hundred scents, he held this unique olfactory show at Cargo club. His intention was to

bring out all of the scents in this whiskey to all the dancers present.

Watching Berghammer work was a treat in and of itself. Standing at his worktable high up in the middle of the dance floor, he was surrounded by thousands of flashy bottles, with two giant fans blowing near him. The magic was that every dancer could experience the scents. "It makes me feel more excited and want to dance more," said the party-goer Wang Ruibuo.

Berghammer began his "smell career" several years ago. He loved the party, and he was amazed with one case at a club in his hometown. "There was a hot DJ playing music upstairs. She was beautiful and the music was good, and it was even decorated with flowers. But it almost didn't matter because

it stank," Berghammer said. The combination of smells – sweat, smoke, perfume – drove Berghammer crazy. It was then he decided he would do something for our noses while dancing. And so he became an AJ.

Over the years his AJ performances have made him famous. He frequently tours and even worked for the movie *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*. His job was to make those scents visible. "I used something and soft lines floating in the air to represent the beautiful smell coming from a girl, and for those smelly markets, there was large grey, dark and brown," he said. Berghammer said the nose was the hardest thing in our body to please, but that it gives him the greatest pleasure trying.

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War photos reveal hope in the midst of despair

By He Jianwei

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has teamed up with five of the world's top war photographers to create an exhibit called *Our World – At War*, which opened at MR Gallery in 798 Art District last Saturday.

The five photojournalists are members of the VII Photo agency, an international cooperative specializing in conflict photography. The exhibit is showcasing more than 40 photos taken in eight countries that have suffered war and conflicts in recent years: Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia and the Philippines.

The exhibition, which debuted in New York in May, will travel to 40 countries to mark the sesquicentennial of the Battle of Solferino, which led to the founding of the ICRC, and to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.

The photographs offer a first-hand look at what war and armed violence do to people's lives: The heartbreaking loneliness of an elderly woman made homeless by last year's war between Georgia and Russia; the unbridled joy of two brothers reunited after being



The boy at a temporary shelter wonders whether his parents are still alive.

separated by fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The images depict the reality and brutality of armed conflict, but they also show that even in the darkest hours of despair, there is a sense of hope and pride, said Martin Unternahrer, communication coordinator of the ICRC.

"Too often we look at an image and we automatically put a label on what we see. There is a tendency to think of people simply

as 'victims' or 'sufferers,' but they are all human beings. War and violence can strip us of many things, but the one enduring and universal thing we all share is human dignity. Behind the suffering there is always a person and that really comes across in this exhibit," he said.

The five photojournalists met countless displaced families, prisoners, orphaned children, war surgeons, poor and widowed moth-

The life of a paraplegic with spinal-cord injuries is extremely difficult, but even more so in Afghanistan.

Photos provided by ICRC

ers, disabled volunteers, rebel fighters, rape victims, counselors and midwives.

"When people are suffering, it doesn't mean they don't express dignity. When people are afraid, it doesn't mean they lack courage. When people are in pain, it doesn't mean they don't have hope," James Nachtwey, one of the photojournalists, said.

Over the past five months, Nachtwey travelled with the ICRC to Afghanistan and the Philippines' conflict-ravaged region of Central Mindanao.

"Whatever else one might see or feel when looking at a picture

of human suffering – outrage, sadness, disbelief – what I think is essential to take away from such an image is a sense of compassion," he said.

The four other photojournalists who made up the team were Franco Pagetti, Ron Haviv, Antonin Kratochvil and Christopher Morris.

The exhibition is part of the ICRC and Red Crescent Movement's *Our World, Your Move* campaign, which aims to "highlight today's most pressing humanitarian challenges and the power of individuals to make a difference," Unternahrer said.

The ICRC also did an opinion survey to measure the impact of armed conflict on the civilian population in the eight countries.

According to the study, about 50 percent of the respondents witnessed armed conflict and two-thirds of the population were involved in it. "Over 50 percent have become homeless. The figure is higher in some countries. For instance, in Afghanistan, the figure is 76 percent and about 90 percent in Liberia," Unternahrer said.

Although people in those countries suffered a lot, about half of the respondents are still optimistic about their future, he said.

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Yin Yang Community Center holds village fair

By Wang Dong

Autumn is a season for gathering and celebration.

As part of the festivities, The Orchard restaurant and The Yin Yang Community Center will hold The Village Fair at Hegezhuang Village on September 5 and 6.

"We planned this colorful, old-fashioned fair for harvest time," Rachael Sherman, general manager of Yin Yang, said.

"We are looking forward to a bustling fair," she said. "It's like a Chinese Temple fair, except for the temple," Sherman said, adding that expats and locals are all welcome.

Various businesses will participate in the village fair, such as Derunwu Organic Farm, Wondermilk, World Health Store, Bookworm, Trek Bicycle, Qiqi Pets and Equuleus International Riding Club. About 50 companies are expected to come and sell their

products, while others will give away samples.

Charity organizations will also be present, including Green Long March and Magic Hospital.

The fair will be held on the grounds of The Orchard and along a pedestrian-only street in Hegezhuang, which runs from the Yin Yang center to the village square.

Besides shopping, there will also be fun activities like a tai chi performance, musical numbers, cooking contests and a pet show.

The seven-year-old The Orchard is a European-inspired restaurant that serves a largely organic menu, featuring home-grown herbs and vegetables.

The Yin Yang Community Center, established last year, is a non-profit facility set in a courtyard next to the small Hegezhuang village. The center regularly hosts health and enrichment programs, such as Pilates, yoga and aero-



The community center fair's poster

Photo provided by Yin Yang Community Center

bics, as well as art classes and support groups. The center also has a library and a cafe that sells health food and drinks.

Where: The First Courtyard,

Hegezhuang Village, Chaoyang

When: 9 am-5 pm, September 5 and 6

Tel.: 6431 2108

Web site: yinyangbeijing.com

Expats take an intimate tour of the Imperial Academy Street



The expats showing great interest in the Imperial Academy Street.

Photo by Venus Lee

By Venus Lee

Two weeks ago, a group of foreigners living in town went on a tour of courtyard homes on Guozijian, the Imperial Academy Street in Dongcheng District. Not even a thunderstorm could get in the way of their plans that day.

The participants, divided into five groups, walked the 700-year-old street taking photographs and videos of things they encountered. They were accompanied by volunteers from Mandarin tube, a language training company, who expounded on the history of the street, which houses the Imperial Academy and the Confucian Temple.

"Participants were asked to record the things they saw on the

street, and at the end of the trip, we looked at each group's works and shared what we learned about the cultural sites," Zhao Yan, the organizer, said.

"The color of the walls, each sign on the buildings, ancient bricks and people living in the hutong will be the focus of our cameras," 28-year-old Henk Van Mourik from the Netherlands said.

Connie Ho, 26, a Chinese history student from the US, was interested in the old cypress trees dotting the courtyard of the Imperial Academy. "The most famous is called Chu Jianbo, believed to be a human spirit, who could tell good from evil. It is said the tree once exposed Yan Song, a minister during the Ming Dynasty, as a

corrupt official by lifting his cap and dropping it back on his head," Ho said.

Jurriaan Meyer, 32, a managing director at an IT company, wanted to know more about a small lake within the school compound. "A Chinese friend told me that Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799, 1735-1795 in crown) named it Ink Lake. According to legend, writers who drank from Ink Lake would have an endless source of inspiration and could easily pass imperial examinations."

During the worst part of the day's thunderstorm, participants ducked into a small teahouse and talked about the photos they had taken. Some played a Q&A game about the hutong.

"It's really fun to learn about Guozijian through this kind of exploration activity. Although heaven was not cooperative, we still enjoyed the trip," Mourik said.

Established in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), the Imperial Academy was the heart of the country's higher education and educational administration from the 13th century through the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Qing emperors gave lectures there following their coronations. Officials stood beside the emperor and echoed everything he said in a loud voice for the hard of hearing.

The academy served as an advanced research institute during the early 1920s after the Republic of China was found in 1921.

Event

Great Beijing International Scavenger Hunt

Scavenger hunts are not just for kids, and networkclub.com is back with their annual event to prove it.

Participants will be given challenging tasks to complete, and depending on the location, stop to perform fun "extreme" activities. Each team will be composed of four people who can use equipment like camera phones and GPS.

Teams will be made up of a mixed group of locals and foreigners, with tasks and clues to be given in both Chinese and English.

The winners will receive cash prizes, gift certificates and free massages. They will also be treated to a celebratory dinner and crowned the Network Club's Dynamic Team.

Where: Still a secret

When: August 29, 10 am-6 pm for the hunt; 7-10 pm for food, drinks and music

Email:

hunt@networkclub.com

Cost: Free (but booking necessary)

Hawka Marketplace at Beijing Marriott Hotel City Wall

Experience unlimited Asian street food from all over the continent; over 50 dishes will be served, plus two free Asian beers, four wine-tasting coupons and unlimited iced tea. There will also be live entertainment, a tarot card reader and a raffle.

Diners can also purchase beverages to take home, including specialty teas, juices, wines and imported beers.

Where: Beijing Marriott Hotel City Wall, 7 Jianguomen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng

When: 6:30-11 pm, Saturday, August 29

Tel: 5811 8266

Cost: 160 yuan per person

Chestnut Orchard Camping Overnight Hike

Do you want to camp overnight in a chestnut orchard in a countryside valley and enjoy two easy hikes and some home-style cooking?

The Beijing Hikers Club has organized just the activity this weekend.

On the first day, participants will hike up a valley, have an early dinner and then pitch their tents.

The following day, they will pack up, have breakfast and set off on another hike that follows a stream to a swimming hole.

Food, tents, mats and sleeping bags will be supplied; discounts will be given to those who bring their own camping gear.

Where: Jiangfu Jiayuan, Room 1907, Building 107, Xiao Chengzhuang, Jiangtai Lu Dong, Lido, Chaoyang

When: August 29-30

Tel: 5137 4906

Cost: 800 yuan

(By Venus Lee)

Safety check a must before moving into new home

By Zhao Hongyi

In today's world, you have to take precautions before moving into a new house or apartment.

You need to be sure your new home is free of dangerous chemical discharges and pollutants from construction materials.

You also want to check that its electric wiring is good and that the building abides by the city's fire safety codes.

Those who want professional advice can go to Beijing Tianheng Chengxin Environment Evaluation Center.

The nine-year old company is affiliated with the municipal construction committee, which gives Beijing buildings clearance and certification.

With dozens of specialists on staff, the center offers a host of services: It examines newly built

and newly renovated houses and apartments, vehicles, construction materials, furniture, decorative equipment and lights.

The center can check air cleanliness and fire safety and environment-friendly provisions, as well as radioactivity and the presence of pollutants like formaldehyde.

"Most people do not care about pollution, but that's wrong," Liu Wei, a senior engineer at the center, told *Beijing Today*. "You need to check for it and then find a solution."

Pollutants and emissions are serious health hazards, especially to children and the elderly.

The center can give advice on how soon owners can move into a newly furnished house; how to deal with unseen pollutants and radiation; and how to insulate

homes from disruptive noises.

The center specializes in corporate clients, like real estate agencies, which need a government certificate to promote their products and services. Its high-profile projects include the renovation of The Forbidden City, the Phoenix Community at Sanyuan Bridge and the Century City Community in Zhongguancun.

It also receives bookings from individuals and provides legal certificates. For details, individuals can reach the center through the following address:

Beijing Tianheng Chengxin Environment Evaluation Center
Where: Qixiang Park, 66 Qian Banbi Lu, Xizhimen Nei Dajie
Tel: 6237 9575; 13911449250 (look for Liu Wei)
Email: kqzljc@126.com
Website: kqzljc.com



An in-house check up is a must for your health.

CFP Photo

Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park opens to the public

By Zhao Hongyi

The Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park welcomed the public through its gates last Sunday. Its attractions include rowing, canoeing, kayaking, a slalom course and a wave pool.

To draw visitors, the park is offering free current drifting sports service throughout this week.

"We've improved the facilities and surroundings," Tian Jianguo, director for economic reform commission of Shunyi, told reporters.

"We aim to develop the park and its neighboring area into a sports and entertainment center," he said.

"I hope that in the future, we can attract more sporting events in our park, such as the annual dragon boat race, the Oxford and Cambridge boat race and other public sport races on water," Tian said.

The park occupies 162.59 hectares of land and is divided into two blocks: a flat waterway and a current waterway. During the Beijing Olympics, more than 30 athletes won gold medals in this venue.

To better protect visitors against injury, the park administration



Current-drifting is a new sport to many Chinese people.

Photo by Bao Tong

reworked more than 100 spots safeguard along the waterways. The park also provides helmets, elbow pads and knee pads free to visitors.

"The park will become an ideal place for individuals and groups to enjoy water sports," Tian said. "It's a great place for people to relax and spend their days off from work."

Open: The free current drifting sports opens only one hour in the morning and another hour in the afternoon; groups need to book sporting equipment

Tel: 8948 2008; 6940 2217 for bookings

Cost: 20 yuan (subject to changes)

How to get there: Take Bus 915 to Caihong (Rainbow) Bridge in Shunyi, then walk east for 300 meters. Alternately, drive along the Beijing-Chende Expressway, get down at Baima Intersection outside the North Sixth Ring Road, then turn east along Baima Road.

Old Beijing photos, paintings, household items on exhibit

By Zhang Dongya

An exhibition in Huguosi that opened last Friday presents the changes Shichahai has seen in the past 60 years. The items on display include hundreds of photos, paintings and daily articles from history-loving residents and folk artists.

About 200 pictures portray the historical scenic area and its residents in the past and present. Old black-and-white photos show scenes from a water-control project, and give a glimpse of one of its three lakes blanketed with lotus. Others speak of the changes in Beijingers' life by juxtaposing images

of wedding dresses and houses throughout the decades.

There are also more than 20 oil paintings by folk painter Zang Daxiang, which depict the lives of people in old Beijing. One shows a peasant from the suburbs leading a donkey through the city streets as it carries soil used for building homes and growing flowers.

Other paintings show street vendors selling colored strings, golden fish and grasshoppers, knife sharpeners and kitchen knives.

Li Bin, 57, a coupon collector since the 1970s, lent his treasures to the exhibition. His collection

includes coupons used between the 1960s and 1980s, such as rice, pork and "industry" coupons.

"In the past, there was what we called the Four Necessities for a family: a sewing machine, radio, watch and bicycle. Aside from money, we needed coupons to buy them," Li said, adding that in the '70s, he spent 152 yuan and five industry coupons to buy a bicycle.

Old household items like sewing machines, radios and black-and-white televisions are also on display, most of which were loaned by their owners.

Folk artists exhibit and sell

their works in adjoining rooms. Liu Bin, 26, a descendant in a long line of kite-makers, shows visitors his colorful creations. Lu Lianda, 71, entertains audiences with his shadow puppets.

Framed shadow puppets may be taken home for 40 yuan. Other products for sale are Peking Opera makeup in glass containers, which cost from 400 to 4,000 yuan; smaller ones are 50 yuan.

Where: 57 Huguosi Dajie, Xicheng District

Open: Until August 30, 9-11 am; 1:30-4 pm

Admission: Free

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

I have a 10-year-old son who is fascinated with Muay Thai. Where can I find a Thai boxing school for him?

Black Tiger Academy at Club Hero has Muay Thai classes tailor-made for children from age four to 12. They teach not only martial arts, but discipline, confidence and physical fitness. Participants are divided into two groups: the Little Tigers (four to eight years old) and the Tiger Team (nine to 12 years old), and there are some interactive events where parents can get involved.

Classes are team-based; students often work in groups of two or more. All classes are taught in English.

Where: Club Hero, Suit 110, Building D, Cable 8 Loft Yard, 8 Langjia Yuan (west of Wanda Plaza), Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Every Saturday and Sunday, 10-11 am (Closed at end of summer holiday)

Tel: 8918 3249; 8656 7818

Cost: 900 yuan / two months.

I'm very intrigued with pole dancing, but I can't find a place to learn it. Do you know of any pole dancing studios near the CBD?

Pussycat Dance, run by a foreign team, is the only ladies' dance studio in town that offers pole dancing lessons. All classes are taught in English and each class accepts a maximum of six students.

The cost varies depending on the package: 880 yuan for 8 sessions; 1,580 yuan for 16 sessions; 1,980 yuan for 25 sessions; and 2,880 yuan for 40 sessions.

Besides pole dancing, the studio also teaches belly dancing, hip-hop, street jazz, club dancing, salsa, flamenco and hula.

Where: Room 906, Building 3, Jianwai SOHO, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5900 0835

(By Venus Lee)



Antique furniture and daily articles



Shadow figures from folklores.

Photo by Wang Ying

New life for old art

Eight Xuanwu artists lead Charming Beijing in Br

The history of Beijing as the capital city began in Xuanwu District. During the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), imperial construction began in the district's Guang'anmen area. Centuries later, the district is famous for its well-kept tradition of folk arts and craftsmanship. Its current artists give new life to the old arts they inherited.

Eight Xuanwu artists will attend the group show at the EU headquarters of Charming Beijing exhibition, organized by the Information Office of Beijing Mission to the European Union, as well as the EU's Directorate-General for Culture. The touring exhibition will visit the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

Yao Guixin

Snuff-bottle painting

By Li Zhixin

Since snuffing tobacco was introduced to China by Italian missionary Matteo Ricci during the second half of the 16th century, the snuffbox developed into a snuff bottle as it adapted to the native culture.

The inside-bottle painting first appeared in Beijing at the end of the 1700s, though Qing Emperor Kangxi previously ordered China's first glass house to produce snuff bottles in 1696.

Yao Guixin, 55, the third-generation of a bottle painting family, has committed herself to the craft for 37 years.

She has painted since childhood. "Before I was bound to the art, I studied traditional Chinese painting for a year which gave me a solid foundation for bottle painting," she says.

In 1973, she was selected as a disciple by Ye Xiaosan (1907-1975), the last master, for her strong understanding of traditional Chinese painting; she learned the craft in three years.

Yao is known for figure painting. "Figures are always the hardest images to draw because each has so many parts," she says. Most figures in art are from classical novels, but the artist creates the images herself by collecting and reading classic literature to learn the background that brings each character to life.

"For example, *Hundred Sons* presents a scene of 100 children at play. Each boy's facial expression, gesture and costume is different," she says.

It usually takes a week to a month to complete one painting depending on its content and complexity.



Snuff-bottle painting by Yao Guixin



Eggshell art by Zhao Wei

Photo by Wang

Because snuff bottles are pocket-sized, the paintings must be very subtle and delicate. Besides the artist's skills, the materials are very important. The artist uses two sticks: one made of willow to feather the paint, and another made of bamboo to create hard lines.

Guo Shigang

Drama mask painting

By Li Zhixin

Twenty nine-year-old Guo Shigang has been studying and painting drama masks for more than 20 years, and was named the youngest master of a folk craft by the Beijing Toy Association this year.

Guo was deeply influenced by his father. "I felt curious about art when I saw my father painting masks, and I produced my first finished product when I was eight years old," he says. With the encouragement of his father, Guo carried on his cause after

graduating from junior high.

The conventional patterns of early drama mask paintings were mainly totems. But in the last two centuries, makeup elements from Beijing Opera have become creative reserves for mask painting.

Guo does not simply copy facial makeup. He transfers the actor's facial expressions into his masks. In order to make the mask more vivid, Guo watches Peking Opera on TV for hours, studying how the actors' facial expressions change. "It is very hard to catch because their expressions shift so fast. But once

I find one, I try to transfer it to the mask," he says.

The simpler the mask seems, the harder it is to paint. "The lines require perfect symmetry: any deviation will compromise the visual effect of the whole piece," he says.

Red, white and black are the most commonly used colors in mask painting. Clay, plaster and paper are used to create masks, but clay is the best because of its texture. Guo says it takes him four to five days to complete a work.

Zhao Wei

Eggshell art

By Wang Dong

The West has Easter Eggs, but painting on eggshells is also part of Chinese folk art. Tang Dynasty (618-907) records first mention people painting on ostrich eggs. The art developed fully in Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), when artists improved on traditional skills with realistic paintings and ink and wash on special surfaces.

Zhao Wei, a 57-year-old elegant woman, is one of the most outstanding masters of eggshell art.

Born in Tianjin, Zhao inherited her artistic genes from her father, who was also a talented handicrafts master. She learned painting from childhood and began focusing on eggshell painting in the 1970s, when she was

sent to work in the countryside of Heilongjiang Province.

Hard as the conditions were, she persevered in her art studies. "I could always find time to paint," she says.

Decades of experience have enabled Zhao to easily sketch a figure with only a few strokes. On the tiny and spotless white canvas, she captures birds, flowers, fish, folktales and Olympic mascots. The surface of an eggshell is space enough for any theme.

Zhao, like many folk art masters, is always innovating. She learned to cut eggs into perfect halves and invented ways to carve on and embroider after numerous failures.

Her patience paid off.

Zhao has created dozens of masterpieces including her carving of the zodiac animals and a shell embroidery titled "Roses Bouquet."

Zhao owes thanks to her husband, who gave her the idea to carve on and embroider egg shells.

"He did not understand my passion for the eggshell art at first," she says. "But after seeing my constant fascination, he started to encourage me and give suggestions."

Zhang Yan

Brick carving art

By Wang Dong

Brick carving dates back to Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-256 BC). It was used to decorate graves in Han Dynasty (202 BC - AD 220), and since Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) has been used to adorn houses.

The art covers a host of subjects, including feathers, flowers, tigers, gardens, landscapes and theatric characters. Brick carving can be seen in gateways, door pockets, beams, eaves, roofs and ridges. *Siheyuan*, traditional courtyards, are often decorated with the carvings.

Zhang Yan is the sixth successor to a line of Beijing brick carvers. Born into a folk art family, he learned painting, paper-cutting and clay sculpture since childhood.

He chose to dedicate himself to brick carving in

the end, because it reminded him of the decorative walls in the siheyuan where he grew up.

Besides superb craftsmanship, brick carving also features exquisite materials. Zhang makes his own bricks for carving. The special brick is a mixture of five kinds of clay, which makes it lighter and easier to carve than common bricks.

Zhang also likes ancient miniatures. It took him almost 20 years to learn how to make bricks that are as small as fingernails that can still be used to construct a building. The decorative patterns of the tiny bricks are as delicate as their larger counterparts.

He and his apprentices also created some new patterns, using Western knights and the fire-breathing dragons of fairy tales.

The works Zhang will bring to Europe are his smallest. One of them is engraved with trees, blooming flowers and a flying magpie and fits in one's palm.

Photos provided by the artists



Drama mask paintings by Guo Shigang

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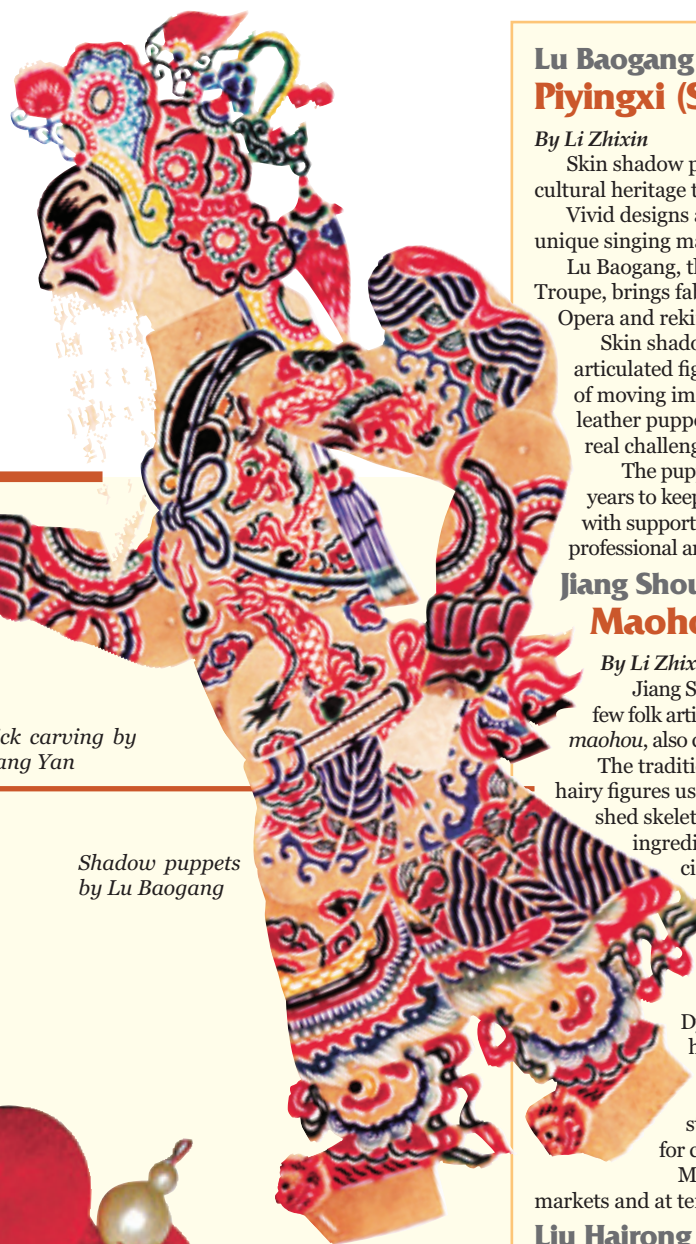


ang Dong



Brick carving by
Zhang Yan

Shadow puppets
by Lu Baogang



Lu Baogang Piyingxi (Shadow puppets)

By Li Zhixin

Skin shadow puppets, a tradition dating back 2,000 years, are an intangible cultural heritage that has spread to many countries.

Vivid designs and a rich variety of colors, delicate costumes, lighting and unique singing make up the fascinating world of shadow play.

Lu Baogang, the fifth generation of the Lu Family Shadow Puppet Theater Troupe, brings fables and legends to life, breathes new excitement into Peking Opera and rekindles interest in folk tales.

Skin shadow puppets are used in a form of shadow theater. Artists use articulated figures in front of an illuminated backdrop to create the illusion of moving images. "But we have to present authentic feeling through these leather puppets, and make audiences get lost in the story. Performing is the real challenge for any artist," Lu says.

The puppets used by Lu's troupe are made in-house. Lu has struggled for years to keep his troupe together and continue its tradition of performance, with support from Xuanwu District's Cultural Department. His is the only professional art group performing skin shadow puppet plays in the capital.

Jiang Shouyu Maohou

By Li Zhixin

Jiang Shouyu, 65, is one of the few folk artisans committed to making *maohou*, also called "hairy monkeys."

The traditional handicraft creates hairy figures using magnolia buds and the shed skeletons of cicadas: common ingredients at any Chinese medicine store.

"Every monkey figure has a different pose to show life on Beijingers' streets and lanes," Jiang says. For inspiration, he often wanders the streets to observe people's movement and action.

The craft emerged in the middle of the 1800s. During Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), two assistants in an herbal medicine shop happened to arrange the pieces in the shape of a small monkey, and their boss found it interesting. From then on, the shop sold the two ingredients together as a monkey-making kit. People started buying the kits to entertain bedridden patients or as toys for children, letting them make monkey figures on their own.

Maohou gradually became a popular folk art, often appearing in markets and at temple fairs.



Liu Hairong Ba ba drum

By Wang Dong

A ba ba drum is a toy that combines three kinds folk crafts: painting, carving and clay sculpture. The small drum toy consists of a shaft, a short drumstick and a drum made of clay. When the shaft is twirled, the drumstick will beat the drum consistently and make a sound like "ba ba."

The drum often features various subjects from Chinese tradition, such as Sun Wukong, the Monkey King and the 12 zodiac animals.

Ba ba drums are especially good toys for children, since it encourages them to use both their hands and brains to explore its interesting sound and appearance.

Liu Hairong, wife of the brick-carver Zhang Yan, is among the most extraordinary masters of this art.

Liu was also born into a handicraft artist family. After she married, Liu learned the craft from Zhang's mother soon and exceeded her husband's ability.

Although the toy looks small and simple, many unique skills are required. "The clay is especially important. Without the right composition, you will never get it to produce the right sound," she says.

The toy is popular with both the young and the old. "The drum may be small, but the idea behind it is great," says Liu.



Lu Xiaorong Walnut decorations

By Wang Dong

Rolling walnuts in your hand is an old Beijing tradition.

Many people believe that twirling two walnuts together in one hand improves one's health, according to the principles of acupuncture and traditional medicine. The walnuts will eventually turn purple and take on an appearance similar to ancient jade after being used for a long time, which makes them precious collectibles.

When he was diagnosed with diabetes in 1995, Lu Xiaorong started playing with walnuts hoping it would benefit his health. In the decade since, "Walnut Lu" has become an outstanding collector, appraiser and craftworks master.

Lu makes different kinds of fine works by cutting the walnuts and gluing them back together piece by piece. He creates vases, brush pots and even Chinese knots. His patterned craftworks display the delicate beauty and natural texture of the inside of the walnut.

He will show his craft during a visit in Europe and will ask viewers to piece together their own designs.

"I believe that everyone will like it. Westerners, the same as Chinese, value works that show pure natural beauty," Lu says.



Walnut decorations by Lu
Xiaorong Photo by Wang Dong





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Learning to say

By Venus Lee

The organizer announces the start of the activity, and 12 tall and awkward men take to the streets looking for an attractive woman.

Some followed a woman for a long time before watching her disappear into the crowd. Though they came back disappointed, the teacher sent them out to try again.

The group meets every week in the basement of Oriental Plaza. Last Saturday, as they have many times, they went out into the streets to practice their undeveloped social skills.

"In the cyberspace, people have an easy time talking to strangers. But in real life, there are many who are too shy to meet a member of the opposite sex," said the organizer, a Peking University psychology graduate whose clients call Mo or Mogui Zixunshi, "the devil's consultant."

He said the activity helps single men who are very guarded around women to improve their communication skills.

Mo started hosting the activity in February 2007. At the beginning, he shared his experiences of trying to meet women on his blog. "Gradually, more and more people asked me how to approach women, how to land a good date and how to communicate, so I

opened a training class with practice activities for single men."

Tuition costs 600 to 2,000 yuan depending on the training session's content and the number of participants. More than 300 single men have attended the class to date.

"Most participants are scientists and engineers," Mo said. "They are introverts and have few chances to meet women, let alone seek a girlfriend. But most of them come wanting to improve their communication skills and try their luck at the activities."

Mo said he provides consultant services Monday to Thursday online to help students learn how to date the woman of their dreams. He takes them

out to practice at certain sites from Friday to Sunday, and invites broadcast and dance teachers to teach the students how to articulate themselves and walk well. Mo himself offers suggestions on clothing and hairstyles.

"However, whether they can succeed depends on their own personality," Mo said. "It is impossible to create true love through my class. I just provide single young men with the tools and a chance to meet girls and offer suggestions on common dating problems."

Cases

"I conquered my fears of speaking to women."

Yu Mao, 26, a physicist, spent 2,000 yuan to attend the training class.

"I am always the youngest one in both my class and the lab. It's hard to approach women who are older than me. I hardly have a chance to meet any girls the same age as me, so I have no experience with them," he said.

What moved him to change was the failure of his first love last year. Yu said their relationship only lasted a month. During that time, he was always nervous to speak to her. "She was unreachable in my mind, so I was always afraid of making mistakes and behaved unnaturally," he said.

By chance, he read Mo's stories on his blog and decided to try. He attended the class and the activities since November, 2008.

"I was refused millions of times during the first six months. It has only been since May that I dared to tell any girls that I liked them," he said.

Yu met his current girlfriend in July. "It was in Xinzhonguan, Haidian district. When I had finished dinner with my friends and was leaving to go home, I saw a girl with long hair," he said. Bolstered by his friends, he went up, talked to her to ask her out. "She was not surprised, but gazed at me for a second before saying, 'Why not?'" he said. Their following chat went well, and he asked for a date at the end. A month later, she accepted him as her boyfriend.

"The class and activities have helped me to let go of all the mental baggage I had built up from years of rejection. I feel like I am getting more mature and confident," he said. His girlfriend agrees. She said anyone too scared to ask out a girl cannot be considered a real man.

Yu's communications with his colleagues has also improved. "Now I don't feel embarrassed to talk to my female colleagues and my work has improved."

"Just for fun and to rediscover myself."

Fan Yun, 20, is a junior studying print and publishing at Sichuan Normal University. He spends his summers in Beijing, and has attended the activity several times.

Yu said he is an introvert and his parents are always worried about his passiveness. He decided to challenge himself in a new environment during this summer holiday.

"I am not just looking for a girlfriend: I also accost men. At the very beginning, I spoke so quietly that no one could hear me, and I felt very ashamed when I was refused. After countless failures, I gradually got over the rejection," he said.

He still remembers his first successful experience. "It was on a bus, I noticed a girl carrying several big bags who was ready to get off. I really wanted to get to know her, so I went up and said 'Hi' behind her, but she didn't hear me. Then I raised my voice and said 'Hi, Can I help you?' She accepted my offer and I got her phone number, and we have become good friends."

"I began to enjoy the challenge. It is really fun because you can jump out of your comfort zone to meet new people and situations you can't control or anticipate. It has really opened up my attitude toward life," he said.

'Hello'

Although simple enough, it is really hard for some people to say hello to the opposite sex.

Photo provided by the consultant

Guide

Mo said although meeting people sounds simple, it is a complicated art. "It demands the lucky alignment of time, location and personality – feelings matter too," he said.

Openings:

Mo said what to say depends on the situation, but all successful openings are simple, direct, sincere and polite. Mo said the best way to meet a woman is to say your intentions directly:

- Hello, I am _____. I would like to get to know you.
 - [If she is carrying something or lost ...] May I help you? If you have any other problem, please let me know.
 - [If she is holding a book ...] Oh, I read that book. Have you read anything else by that author? Well, can I get to know you?
- "This will show them you are honest," Mo said.

Location:

As for the location, Mo usually chooses sites near residential areas, which are safe. "No one will assume you are a bad guy in those places," he said. Campus, shopping malls, bookstores, cafes and restaurants, exhibitions, theaters and friends' weddings are good places to meet women, but avoid the railway station, Internet cafe and ballrooms.

Other tips

- First impressions are important. People usually judge a stranger from his appearance, so Mo reminds his students to pay attention to their dress and hair before going out.
- Never fly into a rage or make abusive remarks if you are rejected. Just smile, say goodbye and walk away.
- Avoid bodily contact. "Distance can make the woman feel safe, but don't make the distance too wide or other people will influence your communication," he said.
- Don't interrupt her unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Make sure you walk on her left while speaking to a woman.

The hidden world of Wudaoying Hutong

Shopper's Guide

By Wang Yu

Hutong shops are the Beijing alternative to shopping malls. The most well-known among these neighborhood alleys is Nan Luoguxiang, which is rarely missing from the itinerary of tourists.

West of the Lama Temple is Wudaoying Hutong, which some people dub "the next Nan Luoguxiang." Wudaoying's collection of shops is growing, but it still provides the brand of peace and quiet that people seek out in hutong.



Second-hand fashion with a heart

The owner, Xiangzi, opened Brand Nü, a small second-hand store last month after coming back from Canada and feeling a need to pay things forward. "I felt so lucky to have a good job, a happy family and the opportunity to have lived abroad for two years as a TV director. As a Buddhist, I thought maybe it was time that I do something for others," he said.

Half of the store's products are given by Xiangzi's friends, most of who are women who shop regularly and own many things they do not use. There are piles of clothes in a variety of styles; shoppers will feel like they're rummaging through an old wardrobe. Shirts cost from 10 to 80 yuan, while jeans, no matter which brand, go for 50 yuan.

Brand Nü welcomes donations, which make up a part of its inventory. "I set aside the relatively new and valuable stuff – by which I don't mean expensive but attractive. The rest are given to people in poor areas," Xiangzi says.

The shop also teams up with NGOs such as One Foundation, Beijing Cultural Development Center for Rural Women and Xingeng Workshop to sell handicrafts made by women from impoverished rural communities. At Brand Nü, customers can find traditional baby shoes, handmade cushions, wallets and other original-design household items. The profit from these items is given to the NGOs to finance their future projects.

The shop has yet to recover its capital, but Xiangzi has his family's support to continue the venture. "It's like a platform where I can bring together NGOs, designers and customers to generate money for poor women in rural areas," he says.

The former TV fashion director's next project is to alter some of the second-hand clothes – working with the students at Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology – to make them more trendy and attractive. The stop also plans to deal in second-hand books.

Brand Nü

Where: 61 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

Open: 10:30 am – 10 pm

Tel: 15011153421



Handicrafts at Brand Nü are made by women from impoverished rural areas.

Hand and foot care

Despite its name, Zig Zag is not a cigarette shop but a massage and nail salon specializing in hand and foot massage.

The name was chosen because it sounds similar to the Chinese words *zhege nage*, or "this and that" in English. "Those are also two of the first few Chinese words that foreigners learn," Wu Jiang, the shop owner, said.

Tired of the rapid, impersonal salon service in the crowded downtown area, she tailor-made Zig Zag from her ideal salon experience: a cozy environment, professional technique, unique decoration and pleasant background music.

The shop's decor has Southeast Asian influences, and includes furniture and adornments Wu picked up during her travels overseas. The music is always soothing, and through the windows, customers can watch hutong life go by.

Zig Zag uses O.P.I. nail products. A standard manicure, which takes about 40 minutes, costs 68 yuan. A standard pedicure costs 88 yuan, while a foot massage is 68 yuan per hour. Flower drawings on nails and color tips are available at extra cost.

The shop also offers beverages like iced coffee (20 yuan), latte (20 yuan) and honey water (10 yuan). All the coffee drinks are made from Italian coffee. While enjoying their drink, customers can settle down for a waxing treatment (50 to 238 yuan depending on the body part).

Zig Zag

Where: 55B Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 11 pm

Tel: 8404 0020

Website: zigzagbeijing.weebly.com



Zig Zag's shop owner opened the shop to create her ideal salon experience.

Tibet art, furniture and decor

Sattva boutique and art gallery draws the attention of passersby with a colorful Tibetan Buddhist tapestry hanging by the window.

The tapestry, called a Thangka, is painted on a flat surface. Thus, it can be rolled up when not on display.

Such artwork was originally carried by monks traveling from monastery to monastery; they served as important teaching aid depicting the life of the Buddha, various influential lamas and other deities. They were also used as meditation tools and centerpieces during rituals or ceremonies.

Besides the Thangka, there are also Mandalas, which are painted to show the relationship between human beings and the cosmos. The word Mandala means "magic circle," but the tapestries are made up of geometric patterns of squares and concentric circles. Making a Man-

dala requires a higher level of skill, which makes it rarer and more valuable than a Thangka.

The shop's owner Liu Chang discovered the Thangka on a trip to Tibet and afterwards decided to open a shop that offered the art. Similar paintings can be found in the shops around the Lama Temple, but most of these pieces are mass produced; the traditional process of making Thangka takes a lot of time and effort.

The Thangka in Sattva are created by artists in Qinghai Province following the traditional method. So it's not a surprise that each piece costs around 6,000 yuan.

Besides this, the shop also sells Tibetan furniture, yak wool rugs and Tibetan herbal incense.

Sattva

Where: 60 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 9 pm

Tel: 6406 5363



Mandalas are painted to show the relationship between human beings and the cosmos.

Photos by Song Nannan

Continued on page 17...

... continued from page 16

Diner's Guide

By Wang Yu

Cozy hutong life cannot exist without mouthwatering food and satisfying drinks.

Like most shop owners in Wudaoying Hutong, the owners of the restaurants and cafes are in the business because of their love of food. Some of the establishments evolved from places where the owners and their friends gathered to dine.

Besides the excellent menu, Wudaoying draws a friendly crowd of people eager to share their stories.

Photos by Song Nannan



Traditional Spanish Paella with seafood, 160 yuan for one to two persons; 290 yuan for three to four; and 490 yuan for six to eight

Photos provided by Saffron



Pear, goat cheese, walnut and pine nut salad, 49 yuan

Mediterranean hideaway

Originally located in Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District, Saffron is the second restaurant run by Yaoyang and Li Yang, a young couple who went into the business because of the husband's love of cooking.

Yaoyang worked as an assistant at an Italian restaurant while studying in Ireland a few years ago. He took up cooking classes upon returning to Beijing and landed a job at a Spanish restaurant in Sanlitun. The next step, he knew, was to open his own dining place.

Saffron, decorated in Mediterranean style, has a small glass-enclosed courtyard at the center. The elegant layout was designed

by Li and incorporates decorative pieces she found during her travels. From a seat under a date tree in the courtyard, customers can watch the cooks busily working in the kitchen at the other end of the room.

Yaoyang and Li recommend the Traditional Spanish Paella (160 yuan for one to two persons; 290 yuan for three to four; and 490 yuan for six to eight). Diners have a choice between seafood and black ink. The rice is bursting with flavor, but the best part is the steamed scallop garnish.

The restaurant's menu changes seasonally; in summer, it's best to fill up on refreshing salads. There is also beef carpaccio (68

yuan) with thick slices, Parmesan cheese, garlic coriander and balsamic vinegar; and tuna carpaccio (59 yuan) with olive oil, mango and sea salt.

Saffron has a basement ideal for family parties and big gatherings. Li also uses the space as a classroom for the children of migrant workers who live in Wudaoying. She teaches them English, art and music during their weekly meetings.

Saffron

Where: 64 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

Open: Daily except Monday, noon – 2 pm for lunch; 6-10:30 pm for dinner

Tel: 8404 4909

Hong Kong cafe and culture center



The cafe's name, Sun Ye, means "great" in Cantonese. Now in its fourth month, it started out as a place where its Hong Kong owners gathered to share food and drinks from home.

Music is one of the elements that makes the cafe remarkable. It has 1980s and 1990s Hong Kong and Taiwan pop songs blasting from the speakers, reminding Chinese customers of the good old days and giving foreigners the feeling of being somewhere exotic.

Old and simple wooden tables and chairs from Shanghai make up most of the furniture. There are black-and-white photos hanging on the walls, shot by one of the owners' friends. An old electric fan sits on the shelf in front of the counter. The place was purposely made to look like an old Hong Kong restaurant, said Afa Zheng, one of the four owners and a graphic designer.

Drinks to try are lemon honey (20 yuan), a refreshing summer drink with a moderately sweet flavor. The red bean smoothie (25

yuan) is popular among young ladies. The sweet red bean dessert is topped with taro ice cream and chocolate crumbs.

Hungry customers can order the Hong Kong-style noodle with fried egg (22 yuan). It is a traditional dish from Hong Kong with a variety of flavors and ingredients such as lunchmeat and sausage.

Around the room are comic books, arts magazines and indie music CDs from Hong Kong. The owners are planning to soon stage performances by Hong Kong musicians. Sun Ye is not just a cafe, but a micro Hong Kong cultural center.

Sun Ye Drinking Room

Where: 52 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

Open: Daily 3 pm – midnight, except Sunday 3 pm – 2 am

Tel: 6401 9369



Red bean smoothie, 25 yuan

Photos by Song NanNan

Real, original coffee without the fuss

The most important thing is to be together, and this is why Huang He and a friend opened Together Cafe.

The homey cafe was made for long, leisurely chats. Travel enthusiasts will revel in its bookshelf full of books and magazines on strange and exciting lands. There are also photos taken by the owners during their travels. Tables are covered with striped cloths with a Yunnan style, where Huang lived before moving to Beijing.

Together was one of the first shops in Wudaoying Hutong, opened on the lunar New Year's Day this year. Huang chose the location for its quiet environment and never thought it would flourish like it has today. "It is

as comfortable as Nanluoguxiang two years ago, before the boom," he said.

A long-time coffee lover, Huang prides his cafe for offering original coffee. "We do coffee the way they are made in their countries of origin," he says. The cappuccino (25 yuan) is served without the swirly milk design found in cafe chains.

Among Huang's recommendations are Brazil coffee (20 yuan), Columbia coffee (20 yuan) and roast coffee (20 yuan). The latte (28 yuan), with different layers of flavor, is a hit among the ladies.

Together Cafe

Where: 36 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

Open: noon – 10:30 pm
Tel: 6401 9369



Latte, 28 yuan

Photo by Elve Liu

Electronic music label celebrates 2nd birthday

By Wang Yu

Local music label Acupuncture Records, credited for ushering in a new era for electronic music in the country, will hold its second birthday party on September 5.

Since its establishment in September 2008, the label has hosted events that contributed to the cultivation of electronic music in Beijing. Among these were Minimal Hit, Freak DJs, Spooked Halloween Party and Genesis New Year's Eve Countdown, which regaled music lovers with fresh party beats.

In May, Acupuncture's name made it to the calendar of national musical events when it staged Intro 2009 – China's first electronic music festival. World-renowned electronic DJs, producers and visual artists joined forces with local talents to create an extravaganza for 8,000 fans in D-Park at 798 Art District.

On the side were electronic music conferences, DJ workshops and movie screenings to facilitate knowledge exchange among artists, industry professionals and the public.

"(The event) involved everyone from regular electronic music fans to full-time music promoters. It was a tough road, but each of us enjoyed the process," Wang Miao, one

ACUPUNCTURE RECORDS 针刺疗法 2ND BIRTHDAY 二周年派对 AT 751 TANK ZONE 七九罐751北京时尚设计广场 2009.9.5 SAT. 9PM-5AM

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X.L.F. - PANCAKE LEE
TERRY TU - OU YANG
& PATRICK YU (DJS)
ELIXIR & DOUBLE VIE GROUPE (VJS)
MAN MACHINE OPERATED LIGHT BY THISMEDIA**

of the record label's co-founders, said.

The company is now preparing to go to the next level by taking electronic music nationwide with its 2009 China Tour.

But Acupuncture's lifeblood has always been making records. To date, it has released three EPs and one album, an admirable feat in the pop-drenched Chinese music scene. International co-productions and remix swap projects are also in the works.

In December 2008, the label debuted on the music download site Beatport.com, which put local DJs side by side with world artists. At next week's anniversary party, a new album will be launched to mark the occasion. Electronic musicians such as Weng Weng, XLF, ELVIS T, Pancake Lee, Terry Tu, Patrick Yu and Ouyang will take the stage, along with VJs Markus Schneider, Double Vie Groupe and Elixer.

Acupuncture Records 2nd Anniversary
Where: Tank Zone, Block C, 751 D-Park, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: September 5, 9 pm – 5 am next day
Admission: 70 yuan advance purchase; 100 yuan at the door
Tel: 13810347555 for English service

Upcoming

Nightlife

Video Games Live – China Tour

Where: Capital Gymnasium, 56 Zhongguancun Nan Dajie, Haidian District
When: September 5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845 for booking

Stage in September

Concert

Roland Batik Solo Concert

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), Dongcheng District
When: September 11, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan
Tel: 6559 8306

Bach Cycle – Sheng Yuan Piano 2

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), Dongcheng District
When: September 18, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan
Tel: 6559 8306

Lucerne Festival in Beijing 2009

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: September 20-25, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-1,580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Madame Butterfly

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: September 12, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-400 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

Indian Musical – Merchants of Bollywood

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: September 25-29, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-2,009 yuan
Tel: 5166 3124

Shanxi Zarzuela – Liberation

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: September 1-7, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-400 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Theater

The National Theater Company of China starts a five-month-long performance, featuring 17 dramas of various styles in different theaters around Beijing.

Don Quixote

Where: National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: September 2-4, 6, except September 5, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Dushi Jiongren

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: September 9-13, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-680 yuan
Tel: 6500 1188

(By Jackie Zhang)

Friday, August 28

Exhibition

China's 60th Anniversary Exhibition

Where: Capital Museum, 16 Fuxingmen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District
When: Until September 15, daily except Monday, 9 am – 5 pm (reservation necessary)

Admission: Free
Tel: 6339 3339; 6337 0491

Tranquility and the Sudden Light – Antique Exhibition for China's 60th Anniversary

Where: Prince Gong's Mansion, 14A Liuyin Jie, Xicheng District
When: Until October 15, daily, 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (reservation necessary)

Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 8328 8149

Movie

Eternal Summer

Where: MoBox Books Life, 288 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District
When: 7 pm
Admission: 10 yuan
Tel: 8261 8538

With the Girl of Black Soil

Where: Lele Bar (50 meters

east of the Communication University of China's north gate), Dingfuzhuang, Chaoyang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6576 5987

Nightlife

Liquid Oxygen Can Unplugged

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, Room 2308, 3/F North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 5900 0969



Nanwu Band's First EP

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080

Saturday, August 29

Exhibition

I'm Working on Huge Paintings in Beijing – Aida

Makoto Solo Exhibition

Where: Mizuma & One Gallery, 241-15 Caochangdi, Cuigezhuang, Chaoyang District
When: Until November 30, daily, 10 am – 6 pm (reservations necessary on Mondays and Tuesdays)

Admission: Free
Tel: 5127 3267

1963, the Making of Water – Chen Qi Solo Exhibition

Where: Amelie Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until October 15,



daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9698

Movie

Shark Tale

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Haidian District
When: 2 pm

Admission: 10 yuan for children; 20 yuan for adults; 25 yuan for a child and parent
Tel: 8601 6860

Nightlife

J. Rocc

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District
When: 9 pm

Admission: 80 yuan
Tel: 6404 2711

Old What Bar

Where: Lao What Bar, 72 Beichang Jie, Xicheng District
When: 9 pm

Admission: 35 yuan
Tel: 13341122757

Sunday, August 30

Exhibition

Sequela – Qu Kejie Solo Exhibition

Where: Magician Space, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until September 10, daily except Monday, 10:30 am – 6:30 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 8459 9635

Zai – Shen Hongbiao's Sculptures

Where: Loft 3 Art Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 1, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9306

Movie



Jules et Jim

Where: French Cultural Center, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6553 2627

Nightlife

Loving Autumn

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 8 pm

Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Term Begins

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, Room 2308, 3/F North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dong-

daqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 5900 0969



Relieving migraine without medication

Migrain's tied to obesity

The study included 2,211 people between the ages of 20 and 55. Of women in that age group, 37 percent who had excess abdominal fat reported frequent migraines; only 29 percent without excess belly fat reported migraines.

Among men in the group, 20 percent with excess belly fat reported migraines, compared with the non-obese 16 percent.

However, after the age of 55, total body obesity was not associated with migraines in men or women. In women especially, the risk of developing migraines decreased in older woman with larger waistlines.

These results, while still in the early stages, suggest that losing weight in the stomach area may be an effective way for young people – especially women – to control their migraines, said study author B. Lee Peterlin, a doctor at the Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia.

Men and women distribute body tissue in different ways. After puberty, women develop more fatty tissue deposits in the hips and thighs while men have more in their belly. After menopause, women show more fatty tissue in the belly area as well. For some diseases, including heart disease and diabetes, excess fat around the waistline appears to be a stronger risk factor than total body obesity, the doctor said.

Other causes of headache

"Migraine is a neurological syndrome with a variety of causes," said Dou Linseng, a doctor at the neurology department of Beijing Tiantan Hospital. Besides hereditary and hormonal factors, the following act as triggers:

1. Stress

Stress is one of the most common migraine triggers. Experts believe the chemicals that flood the brain during the "fight or flight" response produced by acute stress may cause changes in the brain's blood vessels that lead to migraine. "Interestingly, migraines often appear at the tail end of a stressful period – during a lazy Saturday after a hectic workweek," he said.

2. Sleep deprivation

Those who slept less than six hours a night tended to have significantly more severe and more frequent headaches than those who slept more often.

3. Dehydration

You do not have to drink gallons of water to stay hydrated, he says. "I'd love it if people got more water from eating fruits and vegetables, because then they'd get all the other good things that come with them."

4. Skipping meals

No matter how busy you are, do not skip meals: especially breakfast. "Hunger is a common headache trigger," he said.

5. Too much caffeine and alcohol

A little bit of coffee or alcohol may ease a headache, but too much can trigger one. If caffeine is caus-

ing your pain, gradually cut back until you have caffeine no more than two days a week, Dou said.

6. Weather

Several studies have found migraines are triggered by changes in weather. One study found 62 percent of the subjects thought weather was a factor, though only 51 percent showed a sensitivity to weather change. Migraines occurred most often when there were extreme temperatures combined with high humidity, or significant changes in atmospheric pressure.

By Venus Lee

Migraines are a persistent ailment that is afflicting more young people as city life grows increasingly hectic. Although they are not life-threatening, episodes can ruin people's moods and affect their appetite, memory and sleep.

The cause has long been discussed in medical circles, but a new study suggests that belly fat and other signs of obesity may be the leading cause of young people experiencing migraines.

Relief without medication

Headaches come in a number of varieties – migraines, tension headaches and sinus headaches. Regardless of the type, they can be a debilitating and annoying condition. "A majority of headache sufferers can be labeled as having tension headaches," Dou said.

Through the years, many theories have surrounded the cause of these headaches. Tension headaches are so named because strain in the muscles of the neck can cause significant pain in the head. "Besides using traditional anti-inflammatory medicines, such as ibuprofen or naproxen, there are also other ways to reduce tension in your life," Dou said.

1. Stop stressing and relax

Learn to stop stress before it starts. For example, plan ahead for situations you can anticipate, taking a short walk before a meeting at work or taking a few deep breaths before starting a heated discussion.

2. Deep breaths

Stress happens and we can do little to eliminate it completely from our lives. But we can certainly learn to cope with the pressures of life, and in time, implement effective relaxation strategies that will reduce the amount of tension we experience. "Relaxation begins with identifying those things that make you feel good. It may be listening to your favorite album, avoiding activities that make you feel guilty or spending time with your favorite pet. Whatever it is, time for yourself will reduce the effects of stress in your life," he said.

2. Deep breaths

Breathing goes hand in hand with relaxation. Proper breathing promotes relaxation and is a powerful tool for dealing with pain.

Yogic breathing is a good way to learn to

breathe. Begin by sitting quietly without any distractions. Take a nice, slow, continuous breath through your nose. Hold it for a few seconds without making any other movements. Then slowly exhale through your mouth. Like inhalation, your exhalation should be smooth and continuous. Once you have exhaled, take a short, deliberate pause before starting the cycle again.

"During this whole process, imagine the breath going into your lungs and then heading to your temples or forehead, wherever you're hurting and then picture the breath drawing the pain away and out through your exhaled air," Dou said. "It sounds simple, but even simple tactics can help deal with tension headaches."

3. Moderate exercise

"A half hour of cardio a day, five days a week, is helpful to relieve stress, sending blood to the brain and getting endorphins flowing," the doctor said. Moderate aerobic exercises, such as going for a nice walk in the evening, swimming, cycling or tai chi, are believed to reduce the severity and frequency of migraines.

4. Other behavioral treatments

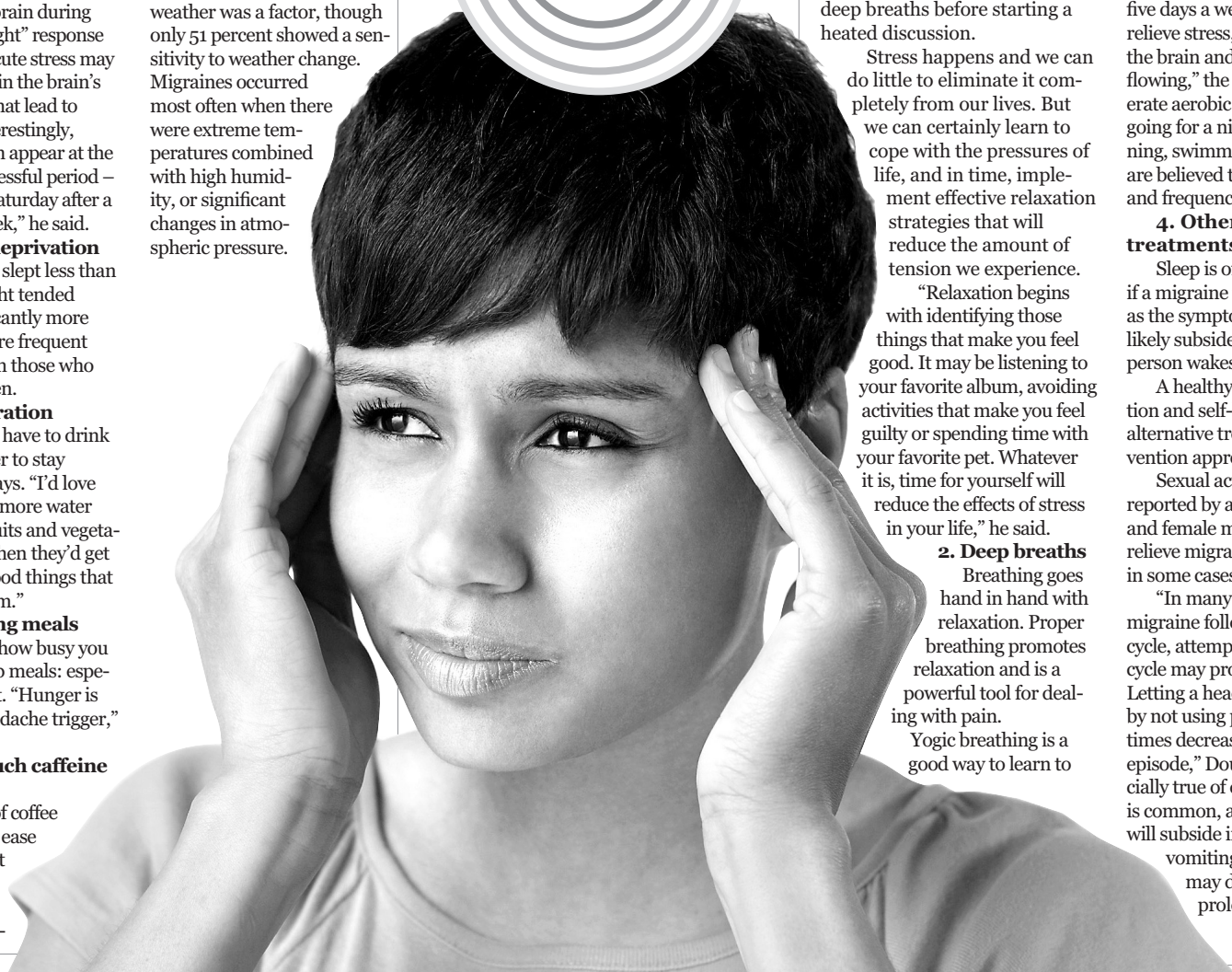
Sleep is often a good solution if a migraine is not so painful, as the symptoms will have most likely subsided by the time the person wakes up.

A healthy diet, pain visualization and self-hypnosis are also alternative treatments and prevention approaches.

Sexual activity has been reported by a proportion of male and female migraine sufferers to relieve migraine pain significantly in some cases.

"In many cases where a migraine follows a particular cycle, attempting to interrupt the cycle may prolong the symptoms. Letting a headache 'run its course' by not using painkillers can sometimes decrease the length of an episode," Dou said. This is especially true of cases where vomiting is common, as often the headache will subside immediately after vomiting. Curbing the pain may delay vomiting and prolong the headache.

CFP Photo



On the edge of North Korea and Russia

By Han Manman

Northern China's border towns and cities provide a glimpse of neighboring North Korea and Russia.

Early autumn is the ideal time to visit some of these places and see extraordinary historical sites and natural attractions.



Tourists use binoculars to look at North Korea from the Chinese border.

Photo provided by AP

Dandong

As a border city between China and North Korea, Dandong in Liaoning Province holds a special charm.

Although there are few remarkable places in Dandong, visitors pour in as it's a good entry point for those wanting to visit the reclusive North Korea.

In and around Dandong

For people who are not planning to enter North Korea, one to two days in Dandong is enough to see the city.

Most tourist attractions are along the Yalu River, which runs southwest for some 800 kilometers along the border of China and North Korea before flowing into the Yellow Sea.

Many historical sites and relics are scattered along the riverbank. One of the most famous and worth visiting is a section of the Great Wall on Tiger Mountain, which overlooks the Yalu River about 15 kilometers northeast of downtown Dandong.

This part of the Great Wall is of particular interest to historians because it's the easternmost portion of the dragon-like Wall built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). At the mountaintop is a tower erected to guard against intruding armies. The tower also provides a panoramic view of the Sino-Korean border and the Yalu River.

Phoenix Mountain, about 50 kilometers northwest of downtown Dandong, is another recommended site. Rising 800 meters above sea level, it's one of the four best-known scenic mountains in Liaoning Province.

Perilous peaks, deep valleys and caves, grotesquely-shaped rocks, limpid springs and ancient Taoist temples make up the major attractions of the sacred mountain, which has served as a Taoist shrine for centuries. Along the mountain paths, visitors will come across numerous inscribed stone tablets left behind by ancient nobles, literati and artists. A hike up the mountain is a challenging but unforgettable experience, rewarded with many fantastic views during the climb.

The best time to visit Phoenix Mountain is between April and October. Each year, on the fourth month in the lunar calendar, a temple fair is held where visi-

tors can enjoy folk art performances and local delicacies.

North Korea-themed travel

Since North Korea opened its doors to Chinese tourists last year, many people have signed up for one- or four-day tours of the secretive country. Visitors head to the North Korean capital Pyongyang by train through Sinuiju, the Korean city opposite Dandong.

Those who would prefer to stay on Chinese soil can still check out North Korea.

A good stop is the Broken Bridge, which only extends halfway across the Yalu River. The US Air Force bombed the bridge during the Korean War, which the Chinese people refer to as the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea.

But think twice about walking along the bridge if you are superstitious. While I was trying to find the perfect spot to take a photo of the bridge, a local resident came up and asked, "Have you walked up the bridge yet?"

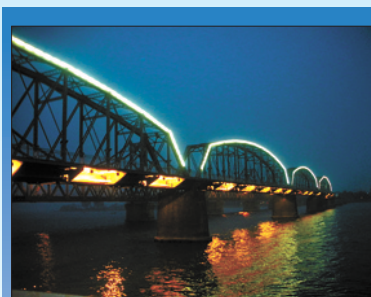
"Not yet, but I plan to go there later," I said.

What the man said next changed my mind. "We locals have a saying: A person who walks up the broken bridge will go up a blind alley in life," he said.

I chose to heed the warning.

Another way to get closer to North Korea is to take an hour-long boat ride along the Yalu River, which brings passengers face-to-face with the residents of Sinuiju. I initially hesitated to take the ride, but the boatman gave me a thumbs-up, saying, "It'll be worth your money."

The charge for a group of four was 800 yuan. Passengers were encouraged to bring food on the trip. "The more cigarettes, sausages and juice you bring, the more you will enjoy your sightseeing," the boatman said.



The Sino-Korean Friendship Bridge



The Broken Bridge Photos by Li Xinjian

He said on the North Korean riverbank were soldiers hiding behind bunkers, monitoring Chinese tour boats through binoculars.

When the boat reached the midpoint between the Chinese and Korean side, we saw two North Korean naval vessels lying at anchor 50 meters ahead of us.

The boatman stopped only 2 meters away from the bank and threw sausages onto the shore. Suddenly, two men came out of the thicket and hastily tucked the sausages into their pockets. The cigarettes the boatman threw also disappeared in a heartbeat.

"Sometimes the people are scared to take the food if they see that a North Korean border guard is standing nearby," the boatman said.

During the boat trip, we saw Korean

women doing their laundry in the river, kids swimming and about a dozen brick houses whose walls were adorned with slogans such as, "Long Live Kim Jong-Il, the Sun of the 21st Century!"

At nighttime, the huge contrast between the Chinese and North Korean border cities becomes evident. Shinuiju is shrouded in darkness while Dandong twinkles with bright neon lights.

Travel information

Getting to Dandong: Flights out of Dandong are limited, so it is better to fly in and out of Dalian or Shenyang, and then take the train or bus to and from Dandong. There are flights from Guangzhou, Qingdao, Sanya, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Getting to North Korea: From Dandong, travelers can cross into North Korea through Sinuiju by train, and then change trains to get to Pyongyang. The cheapest deals can be found by joining a large tour group; rates can go as low as 4,000 yuan for a four-day/three-night package. But take note that rates for foreigners vary, depending on the passport they hold. Foreigners can seek help from Dandong travel agencies to get a visa. However, South Korean and US citizens may not be able to get a visa.

Food: Dandong has the nation's most concentrated ethnic Manchu population; Manchus account for 30 percent of the city's total population. The city is also home to 20,000 North Koreans. Thus, the local cuisine has strong Manchu and Korean influences. Seafood lovers will rejoice in Dandong's delicacies: prawns, crabs and yellow croakers freshly caught from the Yellow Sea.

Continued on page 21...

Wusuli River

The Wusuli River is the country's only remaining nonpolluted river. A Chinese folk song titled "Boat Song of Wusuli River," which describes the river's beauty and the fishing traditions of the Hezhe minority, told the rest of China about life in the Sino-Russian border.

The area used to see few tourists because the roads were not very accessible. But with the return of Heixiazi Island from Russia last year, an increasing number of people have wanted to see the place, and Wusuli River is becoming a popular destination.

... continued from page 20

Autumn's paradise of birds

The river, located on the eastern side of Heilongjiang Province, flows upstream through China and Russia.

Wusuli resembles a clear, transparent and deep-blue sea. Locals say it is among the world's few remaining unpolluted rivers. The best season to see it is in autumn, when the river attracts hundreds of birds and the water turns the color of gold, a reflection of the autumn leaves surrounding it.

Among the birds that flock to the river are high-legged herons and egrets on a search for food. When they flit above the water, they sometimes form a dense mass covering its surface.

The world's smallest town

There are many places worth seeing near the river, one of which is Wusu town. Measuring just 500 meters from north to south, and 100 meters from west to east, Wusu is the world's smallest town. Only temporarily stationed soldiers and fishermen live there after its only permanent residents – an elderly couple – moved out. The town also is also dubbed "East China's No. 1 Sentry" since it has become a military installation.

Catching a sunrise is a must for tourists to Wusu. The best vantage point is the Wusuli River.

Since Wusu belongs to the military, it is not open to overnight visitors. My companions and I chose to stay in the nearest country Fuyuan, the country's easternmost, and half an hour's drive from Wusu.

Based on local suggestion, we drove to Wusuli River at 1 am. Only a half-moon illuminated the dark sky. When we arrived

at the bank, there were already several cars parked.

A border patrol boat bobbed in the water. From the shore, we could see some dim lights on Khabarovsk, the Russian town opposite us. Behind us was the military camp that guarded this easternmost part of the country.



Bus station in Wusu town



Wusu town, across is Heixiazi Island

Waiting for the beautiful sunrise was painful. We were attacked by swarms of huge and hungry mosquitoes. Respite could only be found inside our car.

At 2 am, dawn began to break. Half an hour later, the people broke into cheers as a ray of sunlight appeared on the river. Some of the fishing boats came to life. The blush of dawn, the misty river and the small fishing boats left an indelible image

on my mind.

It is also from Wusu that visitors can reach Heixiazi Island, at the intersection of the Heilongjiang and the Wusuli rivers that serve as the natural border between China and Russia.

Heixiazi Island, also known as Bolshoi Ussuriysky Island, was occupied by

Travel information

Traffic: If you want to watch the sunrise in Wusu town, it's better to find lodgings in Fuyuan county, 30 minutes away by car. Fuyuan does not have an airport or a train station; visitors can fly to Jiamusi city, then drive six hours to Fuyuan.

Tips: Wusuli River is frozen from November till April, so it's better to go between spring and autumn. Remember to bring mosquito repellent to ward off the stingers and other insects.

the former Soviet Union following a 1929 border skirmish. It was finally returned to China last October after more than 40 years of negotiations.

Visitors can take a boat tour around the island, but to enter it requires the approval of the Fuyuan government, which runs Wusu town.

On the road

The biggest excitement is not always

reaching one's destination; sometimes it is the journey there.

The most unforgettable part of my Wusuli trip was the scenes I encountered during the drive up.

I saw Beidahuang or The Northern Wilderness. Dozens of years ago, the area was a vast expanse of wilderness. Later, after construction work by numerous intellectuals and soldiers, the once barren wilderness was transformed into fertile land. It left us in awe of nature's beauty.

My companions and I also passed by Sanjiang Plain, a vast, low-lying alluvial floodplain. There were wet grass meadows and birch trees everywhere.

We came across the hospitable Hoche minority, the only ethnic group in Northern China to live on fishing. With a population of 4,200, the Hoches are one of the country's smallest minority groups.

Early every morning, when most people are still asleep, the hardworking Hoche people are already up and welcoming the new day. Whatever the weather, the Hoches are always out hauling their fish nets. Whatever the direction of the river's flow, they can always find ways to get a catch.

They make a variety of boats, depending on the body of water they have to navigate. Birch boats are the most common and the easiest to build.

If you are lucky enough to be invited to the home of a Hoche family, the host will treat you to fish cooked the traditional way. We sampled their traditional roast fish fillet and their specialty of stewed freshwater fish. We were served light, homemade wine and were entertained by beautiful folk songs.



Sunrise at Wusuli River Photos by Li Xinjian

Dining



Full Moon

Mid-Autumn day is when people celebrate harvest. Enjoy the get-together with families and friends, and appreciate good food and the most beautiful moon. This year, the Marriott Hotel has prepared an enticing array of exquisitely packaged moon cakes and the true meaning of the Mid-Autumn Festival can be best expressed with the gift of moon cakes.

Where: Beijing Marriott Hotel City Wall, 7 Jianguomen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

Cost: 138 yuan (Pearl Moon Cake Box), 188 yuan (Deluxe Moon Cake Box), 288 yuan (Eight Star Moon Cake Box)
Tel: 5811 8888 ext. 8241



Mid-Autumn Festival

In celebration of Mid-Autumn Festival and China's

60th anniversary, Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun has prepared an array of moon cakes with traditional recipes and sugar-free moon cakes to cater to all your needs. The moon cakes are packaged featuring auspicious red festive colors that symbolize peace and harmony. They are an ideal gift for friends and business associates during this joyous occasion.

There is a 30 percent discount on orders of 200 or more boxes. There is a free printing of company logos for purchases of more than 500 boxes. Free delivery to one address within Fifth Ring Road with orders of 100 or more boxes.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

Cost: 188 yuan (Crowne Jewel Gift Box), 588 yuan (Auspicious Gift Box)
Tel: 5993 8888



Where: Zeta Bar, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: September 26, 9-12 pm
Cost: 200 yuan per person
Tel: 5865 5030

Champagne brunch

It's tiny bubbles time at Vasco's. Come and let the effervescence tickle your nose and tingle your palate while tantalizing buffet tables tease your picky taste buds. Meat carving stations, fresh and live seafood, dim sum, sweet temptations, an open bar, taittinger champagne, kids' paradise and a drop-off zone are all available.

Where: Vasco's, Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, 8 Wangfujing Dong Jie, Dongcheng District

When: Until September 13, every Sunday, 12 noon - 3 pm
Tel: 5812 8888



Celebrating Mid-Autumn Festival

To celebrate this Mid-Autumn Festival, Zhao Long Hotel presents variety of tasty moon cakes which are stylishly gift-packed. There are a host of varieties including pumpkin paste, sweet bean paste, purple potato paste, black cherry with cheese, red lotus paste with egg yolk, five kernel, *pu'er* tea, spiced and hot beef, lotus seed paste, premium shark's fin paste, sugar-free green tea paste and premium abalone paste.

Where: Zhao Long Hotel, 2 Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: 118 yuan (superior), 168 yuan (precious), 238 yuan (sugar-free), 338 yuan (wealth double-deck)
Tel: 6597 2299

Zeta Bar happy hour

Come out and celebrate Zeta Bar's third birthday. With a unique mix of stylish decor, cool signature drinks and exceptional service, Zeta has an undeniable edge and has truly been the hottest nightspot in Beijing to escape the mundane tempo of everyday life. Now we would like to see all of you here to celebrate our third anniversary, with live DJs and a three-hour open bar.

Event

My Shangri-La photo competition

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is hosting its My Shangri-La photography competition. Amateur and professional photographers from across the country are invited to submit photos of their own Shangri-La that encourage conservation.

The competition, hosted with Top Travel, Photographer's Companion and sina.com, will run from August 18 to October 18. All participants can submit up to three digital images or scanned transparencies in color or black-and-white, and should submit their work online via sina.com. A renowned panel of judges including Oscar winner Timmy Yip and Wang Chuan, professor and director of photography department, School of Design of China Central Academy of Fine Art, will select the winning photographs.

Hotel

Refresh your thinking

Inspire and be inspired. Book your next meeting at the Westin Beijing Financial Street, where ideas are given room to grow. The package includes a night's stay in a Westin Deluxe Room, full buffet breakfast, a full day meeting package with two tea breaks and buffet lunch, a complimentary LCD projector and one voucher for two. Choose one of the following: two hours of treatment at the heavenly spa by Westin, *inspiRED* Sundaybubbly brunch, an international buffet dinner or a one-way private transfer to a destination of your choice in Beijing.

Where: The Westin Beijing Financial Street, 9B Jinrong Jie, Xicheng District

When: Until December 31

Cost: 1,450 yuan per night, subject to 15 percent service charge

Tel: 6629 7531

Beach party

The Beach Party, a monthly GM cocktail, was held at the Beer Garden of Swissotel. Embassy workers, corporate client, in-house long stay guests and media people, participated in this harmonious gathering. Filled with beach music and authentic food like barbecue and Bavarian specialties from a mouthwatering Weisswurst to delectable sauerkraut with Nuremberg sausages, and the best German traditional Erdinger Weissbier. All the guests and invitees had a happy and memorable night.



Asia's top city hotels by travel, leisure

The Regent Beijing, a luxurious 500-room estate located minutes from Tiananmen Square, was recently voted one of Asia's top city hotels at the 2009 World's Best Awards by *Travel + Leisure* magazine. The award is the latest in a slew of recognitions. The Regent Beijing is a blend of classic elegance with a touch of contemporary comfort for the discerning traveler and guest.

44th Singapore National Day anniversary

The 44th Singapore National Day Anniversary was held at the Grand Millennium Beijing. Kurt Wehinger, general manager of the Grand Millennium Beijing, has invited H.E. Chin Siat Yoon, ambassador of Singapore, to open this prestigious event.

Tourism

August Full Moon events

The August full moon has always been a special event in Greece; it is when the moon is almost within reach.

The event features musical and theatrical performances and other cultural events at 43 sites. The sites will be open for moon viewing from 7 pm to 1:30 am the next day, while a handful will remain open until 3 am.

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

This calls for Dutch courage?



CFP Photo

By He Jianwei

Allen Zhang has decided to break up with his girlfriend because he finds her too jealous and domineering. But he does not have the courage to dump her.

During lunchtime one day, Allen's officemate Eddie Peng saw his glum expression and asked what the matter was. Allen told Eddie about his plan – and his hesitation.

Eddie gave his friend a sympathetic pat on the back. "At last, you've woken up. I've warned you against that woman again and again, but you closed your ears to my warnings," he said.

Eddie has a reputation as a ladies' man and is not shy about his conquests. Allen had a flash of inspiration: He might have found the right person to give him love advice.

Eddie must have seen the hopeful look in Allen's eyes, because he said without prodding: "Why don't you

arrange a dinner this weekend? You can tell her your decision then. It's a public place, which will discourage any hysterical outbursts on her part."

"But I don't know how to say it," Allen said.

"Don't worry about it. Just drink lots of beer and you'll have Dutch courage for the task," Eddie said.

"Dutch courage? Does that mean if I'm drunk I'll have more guts to tell the truth?" Zhang said.

"Yes. Alcohol is the best friend that will boost your courage," Eddie said with a sly smile.

"Dutch courage" is an idiom for false courage acquired by drinking liquor, and is synonymous with "liquid courage."

There are two stories about the origin of this phrase. One goes back to the Anglo-Dutch Wars, the wars between the Dutch and the British in

the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Dutch navy at the time was said to have been greatly feared because of its sailors' bravery. The English attributed this superiority to downing jugs of alcohol before battle, which disputed the bravery of their foes.

Another possible origin of the term is the fact that the Dutch invented gin and are reputed to be heavy drinkers.

Alcohol may reduce inhibitions and make people less likely to be fearful in difficult circumstances, but it also makes people behave stupidly. It certainly does not help in situations where a clear head is needed as much as bravery.

Unfortunately, the latter struck Allen over dinner with his girlfriend. He failed to find the right words, so he is still stuck with her. He is now planning the next dinner, but this time he is relying on well-practiced words instead of liquor.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. The lawyer tasked to deal with inheritance.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): We have to first of all make clear the usage of the verb "to task." It is a transitive verb, meaning "to put work on; force to work." For instance, The master tasked his slaves beyond their strength. Or, The boss tasked him to carry on the job. It may also mean "to burden or strain." For instance, Lifting the heavy box tasked him beyond his strength. Or, Mathematics tasks his brain. So, obviously as the verb "to task" is a transitive verb, the sentence should be: The lawyer is tasked to deal with inheritance. Please take note of the fact that there is a phrase "take to task," meaning "to blame, scold, or reprove." For instance, The teacher took him to task for not studying hard.

Native speaker Steven Sandor (SS): The only thing strange here is the grammar. No one knows who tasked the lawyer with this job. In this sentence, the lawyer is the direct object of the verb and the actor, so it is time to lift the ban on passive voice: The lawyer was tasked with dealing with inheritance. One could probably drop "dealing with" without losing any clarity, since a lawyer is probably not suffering under the burden of his own tangible inheritance.

One other gripe is the use of "to deal." This is an extremely vague verb. Exactly what does he do? Is he in charge of tracking down the recipients of the inheritance? Does he distribute the inheritance? Does he help people to write and notarize their last will? Specifics are important.

2. Three Gorges migrants

ZS: It seems that the writer is confused with the usage of the words emigrant, immigrant, migrant and resettler, which in Chinese are all *yi min*. Residents in the Three Gorges area to be inundated by the forthcoming reservoir need to move to places above the future water line. They are being displaced, which forces them to resettle.

While they are called *yi min* in Chinese, they are resettlers. So, it should be: Three Gorges resettlers.

A migrant is one who moves from one place to another, especially one who leaves one's country or place of birth to settle in another country or place. Migrant workers are those people who leave their place of residence to seek opportunity in the big city. One immigrates to a place, like "Chinese immigrants in New York." The opposite is to emigrate from a place: Germans, Irish, Swiss and Scotch emigrated in great numbers to America.

SS: As Professor Zhu pointed out, this is incorrect. Three Gorges migrants, or perhaps the better-sounding "migrants from the Three Gorges," would refer to those people who have left the area to find work in the city.

This merits a discussion of terms for wandering people in English. Someone who leaves his home to find work is a migrant. If he has no home and wanders in search of work, then he is a transient. If he has been down on his luck for a long enough time, he may eventually become a hobo: someone willing to work any job for food. The step below the hobo is the tramp, who is lazy and content to live as a scavenger and beggar. The absolute bottom of the hopeless food chain is the bum.

By the context of the story, "migrants" is intended to be people who were forced to move. The professor's example of "resettlers," while a little odd-sounding, works. That noun is rarely heard. It is more common to say the people were "forced to resettle."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Accept the silver

By Tiffany Tan

Imagine going shopping for clothes, groceries or medicine, and paying for your purchases in silver coins. Can you picture the look on the cashier's face? Well, the shop with this sign is asking for this scenario.

The thought of silver coins brought to mind a Robin Hood cartoon, in which some of the characters carried leather pouches filled with gold and silver coins. This tale was set in the Middle Ages, so using silver as an everyday currency is really quite outdated.

The Chinese word *shouyin chu* can be broken down into the characters "accept," "silver" and "location," so you can see where the translation went off track. "Accept the silver" may also attract people wanting to pawn off silver jewelry or merchants hoping to sell silver pieces.

These can all be prevented pretty easily. The sign just needs one English word: cashier.





Ice Age 3

Dawn of The Dinosaurs (2009)

Movie of the week

The sub zero heroes from the worldwide blockbuster *Ice Age* are back. This film all about family: starting one, keeping one, becoming one and protecting one. A film about family is always going to ring the right bells, and this is no exception. It is funny, sharp, clever and when it wants to be, will tug your heartstrings. It has just as much humor to keep the grownups happy as it does the kids.

Synopsis

After the events of *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, life begins to change for Manny and his friends: Scrat is still on the hunt to hold onto his beloved acorn while finding a romance in a female saber-toothed squirrel named Scratte. Manny and Ellie, having since become an item, are expecting a baby, which leaves Manny anxious to ensure that everything is perfect when his baby arrives. Diego is fed up with being treated like a house-cat and wonders whether he is becoming too laid-back.

Sid wishes for a family of his own and steals some dinosaur eggs, which lands him in a strange underground world where his herd must come to the rescue. That is when they meet up with a one-eyed weasel known as Buck who hunts dinosaurs intently.

Scene 1

Manny (M): Oh, we need a code word. Yeah, something that says, "the baby's coming."

Ellie (E): Hmm. How about, "Aaah! The baby's coming!" How's that?

M: Nah, it's too long. We need something short and **punchy** (1), like, uh ... "peaches"!

E: Peaches?

M: I love peaches. They're sweet and round and fuzzy, just like you.

E: You think I'm round?

M: Uh ... Round is good. Round is foxy!

Scene 2

Sid (S): [confronting a tyrannosaurus who has come looking for her babies] Look, these are my kids! And you're gonna have to **go through** (2) me to get them!

Manny (M): Sid, whatever you're doing, it's a bad idea.

S: Shh! My kids will hear you.

M: They're not your kids, Sid. Take them back. You're not meant to be a parent.

S: Why not?

M: First sign: stealing someone else's eggs.

Second sign: one of them almost became an omelet.

M: [Sid guards the three baby tyrannosaurs from an adult] Sid! Give them to her! She's their mother!

S: How do I know she's their mother?

M: What do you want, a birth certificate? She's a dinosaur!

Scene 3

Buck (B): The name's Buck. Short for Buckminster. Long for Buh. What are you guys doing here?

Eddie (E): Our friend was taken by a dinosaur.



B: Well, he's dead. Welcome to my world. Now, go home. **Off you pop** (3)!

Crash (C): What's that noise?

B: It's the wind. It's speaking to us.

E: What's it saying?

B: I don't know. I don't speak wind.

[Buck pointing to his bad eye covered with a patch]

B: His name is Rudy and he gave me this!

C: He gave you a patch?

E: For free?

C: That's so cool! Dude, you're awesome!

You're like the brother I never had!

B: [from trailer] Are you ready for adventure?

C&E: Yes, sir!

B: For danger?

C&E: Yes, sir!

B: For death?

E: Uhh, can you repeat the question?

Scene 4

Buck (B): [stopping Manny and the herd from moving on] Whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa! Whoa! What, you think this is some sort of tropical getaway? You can't protect your mate, mate. What are you gonna do with those - those flimsy tusks when you **run into** (4) the Beast?

Crash (C): Wait. You mean there's something bigger than Mommy Dinosaur?

B: Aye.

Eddie (E): "Eye"?

B: Aye aye. He's the one that gave me this.

[pointing to his missing eye, which is covered with a patch]

E: Whoa. He gave you that patch?

C: For free? That's so cool.

E: Yeah, maybe he'll give us one, too!

Scene 5

Sid (S): [to the baby dinosaur] Spit out little Johnny or we're leaving the playground right now! [The baby dinosaur spits up a bird]

S: There you go. The picture of health.

Aardvark Mom: That's not little Johnny!

S: Hey, it's **better than nothing** (5). We are leaving the playground **this instant** (6)!

Vocabulary:

1. **punchy:** accentuated, characterized by vigor or drive

2. **go through:** here means to kill Sid first before getting to the dinosaur kids

3. **Off you pop:** here means go in some very informal way

4. **run into:** encounter

5. **it's better than nothing:** here means dinosaur kids have a good start for vegetarianism

6. **this instant:** right now or at once

(By Huang Daohen)

